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# Saipan Tribune

THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

Volume XXX, Issue No. 254

www.saipantribune.com WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 23, 2020 www.facebook.com/saipantribune

# COVID-19 relief loaded with Marianas benefits

**WASHINGTON, D.C.**—Delegate Gregorio Kilili Camacho Sablan (Ind-MP) said the fiscal year 2021 federal spending bill, including $908 billion in COVID relief for individuals, businesses, schools, and healthcare, is good news for the Marianas. The legislative text (5,593 pages) was finished overnight Sunday, and the House voted on passage at 9pm in Washington last Monday (Tuesday in the CNMI). The final vote was 359 for, 53 against.

» House and Senate act, bill goes to Trump

» CWs qualified for PUC, FPUC

See RELIEF on Page 4

## CNMI has 2 new COVID cases

The Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. yesterday said two additional individuals have been confirmed positive for COVID-19. This brings the CNMI's total coronavirus cases to 118 cases since March 28, 2020.

The two individuals were identified by travel screening and confirmed diagnosis through fifth day testing. As per protocol, the two individuals have been safely in quarantine and were moved to the designated isolation area at the Kanoa Resort Alternative Care Site for close monitoring.

The CHCC has already initiated contact tracing for the most immediate contacts of the new confirmed

See CNMI on Page 4

## AT A GLANCE

As of 8:30pm, Dec. 22, 2020

| GUAM | OLD | NEW | TOTAL |
|---|---|---|---|
| Positive | 7,211 | 27 | 7,238 |
| Recovered | 6,660 | 8 | 6,668 |
| Active | 422 | 27 | 449 |
| Deaths | 120 | 1 | 121 |
| Cumulative Number of Persons Tested | | 99,082 | |

| SAIPAN | OLD | NEW | TOTAL |
|---|---|---|---|
| Positive | 116 | 2 | 118 |
| Traced via Travel Screening | 90 | 2 | 92 |
| Traced via Community Screening | 26 | 0 | 26 |
| Deaths | 2 | 0 | 2 |
| Cumulative Number of Persons Tested | | 22,633* | |
| Days since last community transmission | | 126 | |

*Total count includes the number of persons tested on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota.

*With guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, CHCC has opted to not report active and recovered cases.

Source: Joint Information Center - Guam, Commonwealth Healthcare Corp

## COMMUNITY VULNERABILITY

**LEGEND:**

- **Red:** Least safe
- **Orange**
- **Yellow**
- **Blue**
- **Green:** Safest

*Source: Office of the Governor*

## Congress approves $900B COVID relief bill, sending it to Trump

By ANDREW TAYLOR
ASSOCIATED PRESS

**WASHINGTON** (AP)—Congress passed a $900 billion pandemic relief package Monday night that would finally deliver long-sought cash to businesses and individuals and resources to vaccinate a nation confronting a frightening

See CONGRESS on Page 4

## COVID-19 vaccine available for *man'amko*

By JUSTINE NAUTA
justine_nauta@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. has begun administrating the Pfizer/BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine to the islands' *man'amko* and those with underlying health conditions at the Medical Care and Treatment Site at CHCC's upper-level parking yesterday from 7:30am to 9pm and will continue today.

» Those with underlying health conditions can also be inoculated

According to CHCC, an underlying health condition includes cancer, diabetes, hyperten-

See VACCINE on Page 4

**STOCKINGS ON ISLAND TREES**

With only two days to go before Christmas, more and more homes and buildings all over Saipan are being embellished by festive holiday decorations, and these traffic islands paraded along the main road in Tanapag are no exception. Several red Christmas stockings are seen here hung upon the individual trees just in time for Santa to swing by to deliver our local islanders in the north some holiday goodies on Christmas Eve.

NEIL FAMA

## INSIDE

**BUSINESS**

Celebrate Christmas and New Year at the World Café of Fiesta Resort & Spa Saipan in Garapan!

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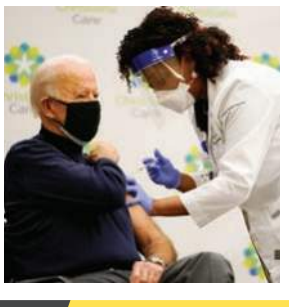

**NATION**

President-elect Joe Biden on Monday received his first dose of the coronavirus vaccine on live television.

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**LIFE & STYLE**

The pandemic may have kept Sir David Attenborough at home for much of 2020, but it hasn't stopped the legendary host from continuing his work.

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# Local

## PSS thanks Kilili for COVID relief act funding

Education Commissioner Dr. Alfred B. Ada thanked Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (Ind-MP) for the additional federal funding that the Public School System will receive from the second phase of the Emergency Coronavirus Relief Act of 2020.

The second round of the bipartisan economic relief put forward by U.S. Congress will provide the much-needed lifeline for PSS, directly funding several existing programs and initiatives that will provide continuous educational opportunities to the more than 10,000 elementary, middle, and high school students on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota.

Ada

"For one, this will guarantee that all of our classroom teachers and support staff will not experience a single payless payday. On behalf of all our educators, I want to congratulate our long-standing partner, Congressman Sablan, for his tireless efforts in securing the much needed federal funds to supplement the shortfall in our local state funding," Ada said.

PSS Federal Programs officer Tim Thornbrugh noted that this second phase of the Education Stabilization funding, a component of the Coronavirus Relief Act, will provide direct support to a whole range of public education services.

"This will not only pay for salaries but can also be used to pay for sanitation supplies needed at our schools to clean every classroom every day, pay for the HVAC services needed for school air conditioners, pay for mental health services, and a whole list of other services," Thornburgh said.

Sablan's work as the chairman of the Education Subcommittee on Early Education, K-12 education and postsecondary education enabled the U.S. congressman to initiate amendments to the Education Stabilization Fund that directly ensured funding for public and private schools in the CNMI, according to Thornburgh.

Ada said that Round 2 of the federal Education Stabilization Fund is coming just in time and will greatly benefit the school district's students, teachers and parents.

Ada also thanked Gov. Ralph DLG Torres for his support for public education. ***(PR)***

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## Yeom appointment as CCC executive director OK'd

**FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Members of the Commonwealth Casino Commission unanimously approved yesterday the appointment of Andrew Yeom as CCC's executive director.

Yeom

At CCC's monthly meeting at the Springs Plaza in Gualo Rai, commissioner/secretary Ramon M. Dela Cruz moved to appoint Yeom as executive director and commissioner/public affairs Diego M. Songao seconded.

Chair Edward C. DeLeon Guerrero, vice chair Rafael S. Demapan, and treasurer Mariano Taitano also voted "yes."

Yeom has served as executive director in an acting capacity since the board delegated the position to him in early August 2020. He previously served at CCC as Compliance Division manager.

Asked for comments, Yeom vowed to the commission and the people of the CNMI that he will put forth his sincere best to carry out his duty as executive director.

Yeom thanked DeLeon Guerrero and the other commissioners for giving him the opportunity to take on this executive director's role.

"I have been blessed to be with the commission for over five years now, pretty much since its inception in 2015," he said.

The executive director said he has seen the tough challenges and struggles that the CCC chairman has endured up close.

"He handled some of the toughest situations with such dignity and professionalism, and I will strive to maintain the same composure or demeanor in times of adversity," Yeom said.

## USDOL wants IPI to be found in contempt

**By KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA**
kimberly_bautista@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The U.S Department of Labor wants Imperial Pacific international (CNMI) LLC to be found in contempt of court for violating a consent judgement.

USDOL, in its petition for contempt, accused IPI executives of unlawfully requiring stranded employees to work without pay during a global pandemic, and failing to meet the workers' basic necessities or provide for their return to their home countries.

The USDOL wants the court to enforce the April 11, 2019 consent judgment and issue an order finding IPI, IPI chairwoman and executive director Cui Li Jie, and IPI CNMI chief executive officer Donald Browne in civil contempt for violating the judgment.

USDOL said IPI executives should pay $788,022.54 to their employees, and pay USDOL $1,379,426 in back wages owed under the judgment.

The USDOL said IPI should be required to place $2 million in an escrow account prior to their employees resuming work.

U.S. District Court for the NMI Chief Judge Ramona V. Manglona will hear the USDOL petition on Jan. 21, 2021 at 8:30am.

IPI last year agreed to a consent judgment with the USDOL to settle and resolve the labor violations by construction contractors of IPI.

IPI agreed to pay USDOL $3,360,000 for back wages, liquidated damages, and civil monetary penalties.

The consent judgment, which also prohibits IPI and its agents from violating labor laws, was signed by IPI Holdings chairwoman Cui Li Jie, her lawyer, Eugene R. Sullivan, and Boris Orlov, senior trial attorney for the USDOL.

"The defendants can put forth no reasonable justification for their failure to comply with the FLSA and the judgment while continuing to profit from their employees' labor. This case requires the remedy of a contempt order to ensure compliance because defendants refuse to pay the wages owed to their employees while profiting from their labor, continue to violate the judgment, and are exploiting workers already struggling because they have not been paid in over two months," USDOL stated.

# ‘CNMI will offer new tourism, world-class destination’

FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The CNMI will offer a new brand of tourism with travelers not only seeing Saipan as a world-class destination but as well as Tinian and Rota, according to Gov. Ralph DLG Torres.

Speaking at a radio news briefing last Friday, Torres said they want to make sure to give a strong statement when tourists come back.

“It will be a new tourism. There will be a new way of appreciating tourists. This is a new way for travelers and we want to make that first impression back to the islands,” he said.

The governor said every flight now is basically like an inaugural flight.

“So I hope that our community, as we see these renovations, painting and so forth being done around the island, please take care of it. That’s what we have,” he said.

Torres said he has been working really hard with private partners through the Governor’s Economic Advisors for the reopening of the economy.

He disclosed at least 35 companies have signed up to be partners and 22 sites that they are continuing to renovate.

The governor said the tourist site at the Suicide Cliff in Marpi was among those being fixed.

Last Dec. 8, a vehicle drove off an area of Suicide Cliff, plunging into the rocks below and killing the driver.

Torres said overall, the whole goal is to make the CNMI, including Tinian and Rota, a world-class destination.

“And this is our downtime. And it’s the best time for us to make sure that we give as much effort, resources, and manpower to renovate and fix up our tourists sites,” he said.

Torres said they are excited seeing a lot of progress.

“You can see also around the island, there’s a lot of beautification that’s happening,” said the governor as he thanked the non-government organizations or the private partners for all the volunteering work and commitment.

Torres said he is hoping that the community can also share their commitment by maintaining the islands’ beauty.

“That’s what why we have tourism, is to showcase our island, to showcase the beauty of what we have, our culture, our language, our people,” he said.

The governor urged the community to give a shout out to the business partners for their commitment and volunteering in making CNMI a better place.

Torres recently announced that he anticipates the partial resumption of tourism from South Korea to the CNMI under the bubble travel program will be next month, January.

He said the CNMI continues to work on reopening tourism industry through a travel bubble agreement with source markets such as South Korea and Japan.

He said the CNMI, however, has remained cautious to ensure any resumption puts the health and safety of the people first.

## COMMUNITY BRIEFS

### Attention: Election candidates, political parties

According to 1 CMC § 6424, all certified candidates must file a detailed “Campaign Statement of Account.” This itemized financial statement, prepared with the advice and co-signature of the candidate’s treasurer, must show the specific source(s), name(s) of contributor(s), and amount(s) of contributions and expenses. The Office of the Public Auditor is mandated by the act to administer the filing of such statements. Pursuant to the act, failure to file a complete, signed, dated, and verified statement by today, Dec. 23, 2020, shall subject you to a fine of up to $100 per day for each date the statement is late.

The “Campaign Statement of Account form, suggested reports, and supporting schedules are available on OPA’s website at www.opacnmi.com or the Commonwealth Election Commission’s website at www.votecnmi.gov.mp. Please note that filing of a “Campaign Statement of Account” form is mandatory.

The sct also requires that the statement be verified under oath by the candidate/political party and the candidate’s/political party’s treasurer. Our office will provide free notary service to those who wish to avail themselves of this service. (Proper identification bearing both the photo and signature of the candidate and treasurer must be provided). Please be advised that our office is closed every Monday due to austerity and on legal holidays. ***(PR)***

### Saipan Mayor’s Office closed today

The Saipan Mayor’s Office will be closed from 11:30am to 4:30pm today, Dec. 23, 2020. ***(PR)***

### MAFEA 25th anniversary, Christmas party Saturday

The Marianas Association of Filipino Engineers and Architects will be celebrating its 25th founding anniversary and Christmas Party this Dec. 26 at the Fiesta Resort & Spa’s Hibiscus Hall. The event will start at 6pm. This will also serve as a fundraising event for the benefit of Filipinos back home who were severely affected by super typhoons Rolly and Ulysses.

### COTA Demand Response closed today

Please be advised that the COTA Demand Response service will be closed today, Dec. 23, due to Professional Development. ***(PR)***

# Man gets $50K bail for forcing himself on woman

The Superior Court imposed a $50,000 cash bail on a man who allegedly forced himself on a woman.

Superior Court Associate Judge Wesley Bogdan imposed a $50,000 cash bail on Edward Tudela Sablan, 45, for one count of sexual assault in the second degree. Sablan is accused of forcing himself on a woman and inappropriately touching her.

Bogdan remanded Sablan to the custody of the Department of Corrections and ordered the defendant to return to court today, Dec. 23, at 9am for preliminary hearing and on Jan. 5 at 9am for an arraignment.

At the hearing, attorney Matthew Holley appeared on behalf of Sablan, while assistant attorney general Samantha Vickery represented the government.

According to court documents, the victim told police that on Dec. 11, around 4am, Sablan sexually harassed and assaulted her in her room at a residence in Gualo Rai.

The victim’s mother told police that on a phone call with Sablan that same day, he said she and the victim should move out and move on because he cannot control himself around her. ***(Kimberly A. Bautista)***

Hafa Adai!
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# 5 villages will have water service interruption today

The Commonwealth Utilities Corp. would like to inform the general public that there will be an emergency water service interruption today, Dec. 23, 2020, from 8am to 4pm, for customers in the following areas: Capitol Hill, Talafofo, Wireless Ridge, As Teo, and Papago areas.

The emergency water service interruption is due to an 8-inch transmission waterline leak located on Papago Drive. Repairs on the water main are anticipated to be completed by 4:00 p.m. Water service to the affected areas will resume thereafter.

For the safety of the men and women at the jobsite, please proceed with caution and/or take alternative routes during the period of the waterline repairs.

CUC continues to work diligently to minimize any inconvenience to its customers. For more information, contact the CUC Hotline (664-4282) or monitor our Facebook page for the latest updates (https ://www.facebook.com/CommonwealthUtiIities-Corporation/). ***(PR)***

# VACCINE

*From Page 1*

sion, chronic kidney disease, asthma, a heart condition, etc. can register to receive the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine. Additionally, CHCC stated that caregivers will be allowed to accompany patients on-site but not be allowed in the vaccination area if space is limited.

CHCC chief executive officer Esther Muña encourages the community to consult with your doctor or healthcare provider first if you have questions about the COVID-19 vaccine.

Muña stated that there have been approximately 700 people who have been vaccinated since last Dec. 19 until yesterday. A total of 400 people were vaccinated yesterday, this includes the *man'amko* and front-liners.

According to CHCC public information officer Lee Tenorio, the CNMI received another batch of Pfizer/BioNTech's COVID-19 vaccine last Dec. 21. This time only one tray. The COVID-19 vaccine requires two doses, 21 days apart to be effective, and will automatically be registered for their second dose.

The CNMI expects to see the first batch of the Moderna Inc. COVID-19 vaccination as early as next week.

To register, visit: www.vaccinatecnmi.com/covid-19/registration/. For the elderly population, 65 years and older, the verification code is "manamko101," and for people living with underlying health conditions, the verification code is "vuln101". Additionally, CHCC will need a copy of a government-issued photo ID and insurance information. Those who aren't able to upload their ID, can bring it to their appointment.

Parking is available at the CHCC's Main Campus on Navy Hill Road.

For those who may not have access to the internet, CHCC is accepting in-person or over the phone registration. Participants can call Vaccinate CNMI Call Center at (670) 682-SHOT (7468) available Monday to Sunday, 7:30am to 10pm. CHCC will need a copy of a government-issued photo ID and insurance information. Those who aren't able to upload their ID, can bring it to their appointment.

After registration, participants will receive a confirmation email or call, and if you do not receive a confirmation email or call, you can call (670) 682-SHOT (7468).

CHCC stated that after the vaccination, registered participants will be monitored for 15 minutes and will get a shot card for their next appointment. It is also common for people to endure pain in their arm during and after the vaccination, however, if side effects do not go away in a week, or you have more serious side effects, CHCC urges to call the CHCC Tele-Triage 24/7 Hotline at (670) 233-2067.

Patients can report side effects by registering for V-Safe or call the Vaccinate CNMI call center. V-safe is a smartphone-based tool that uses text messaging and web surveys to provide personalized health check-ins after you receive a COVID-19 vaccination. To register go to: vsafe.cdc.gov

# CNMI

*From Page 1*

cases, including passengers on the same flight.

Out of the 118 total confirmed cases in the Northern Marianas, 92 are from incoming passengers (49 from the U.S. mainland, 32 from a U.S. territory, and 11 from foreign countries). Twenty-six cases were from community transmission—10 from contact tracing and 16 from community testing conducted by CHCC, including two deaths and four individuals currently on isolation.

The CNMI has now gone 126 days without any community transmission. Its last local case was the 51st person confirmed positive for COVID-19 in early August.

### 121st death in Guam

The Joint Information Center was notified that Guam's 121st COVID-19-related fatality occurred at the Guam Memorial Hospital yesterday, Dec. 22, 2020 at approximately 11:16am. The patient was a 66-year-old male with underlying conditions. He was admitted to GMH last Dec. 3 and was a known positive case.

"With each passing, we are reminded that nothing gold can stay. While his parting leaves an island in grief, his memory will live in the hearts of those who knew him. [First gentleman] Jeff [Cool], Lt. Gov. Josh [Tenorio], and I express our deepest condolences and sympathies to his family and friends," said Guam Gov. Lou Leon Guerrero.

Guam also reported 27 new cases of COVID-19 out of 747 tests performed last Monday, Dec. 21. Five cases were identified through contact tracing. One case reported recent travel history and were identified in quarantine.

To date, there have been a total of 7,238 officially reported cases of COVID-19 with 121 deaths, 449 cases in active isolation and 6,668 not in active isolation. ***(Saipan Tribune)***

# CONGRESS

*From Page 1*

surge in COVID-19 cases and deaths. Lawmakers tacked on a $1.4 trillion catchall spending bill and thousands of pages of other end-of-session business in a massive bundle of bipartisan legislation as Capitol Hill prepared to close the books on the year. The bill goes to President Donald Trump for his signature, which is expected in the coming days.

The relief package, unveiled Monday afternoon, sped through the House and Senate in a matter of hours. The Senate cleared the massive package by a 92-6 vote after the House approved the COVID-19 package by another lopsided vote, 359-53. The tallies were a bipartisan coda to months of partisanship and politicking as lawmakers wrangled over the relief question, a logjam that broke after President-elect Joe Biden urged his party to accept a compromise with top Republicans that is smaller than many Democrats would have liked.

The bill combines coronavirus-fighting funds with financial relief for individuals and businesses. It would establish a temporary $300 per week supplemental jobless benefit and a $600 direct stimulus payment to most Americans, along with a new round of subsidies for hard-hit businesses, restaurants, and theaters and money for schools, health care providers and renters facing eviction.

The 5,593-page legislation — by far the longest bill ever — came together Sunday after months of battling, posturing and postelection negotiating that reined in a number of Democratic demands as the end of the congressional session approached. Biden was eager for a deal to deliver long-awaited help to suffering people and a boost to the economy, even though it was less than half the size that Democrats wanted in the fall.

"This deal is not everything I want — not by a long shot," said Rules Committee Chairman Jim McGovern, D-Mass., a longstanding voice in the party's old-school liberal wing. "The choice before us is simple. It's about whether we help families or not. It's about whether we help small businesses and restaurants or not. It's about whether we boost (food stamp) benefits and strengthen anti-hunger programs or not. And whether we help those dealing with a job loss or not. To me, this is not a tough call."

Congress also approved a one-week stopgap spending bill to avert a partial government shutdown at midnight and give Trump time to sign the sweeping legislation.

Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin, a key negotiator, said on CNBC Monday morning that the direct payments would begin arriving in bank accounts next week.

Democrats promised more aid to come once Biden takes office, but Republicans were signaling a wait-and-see approach.

The measure would fund the government through September, wrapping a year's worth of action on annual spending bills into a single package that never saw Senate committee or floor debate.

# RELIEF

*From Page 1*

This was the third time the House has passed COVID relief, once in May and again in October. Each time before, the Republican Senate has refused to take action. But today, two hours after the House, the Senate also voted passage.

"Unemployed workers, who were afraid their weekly federal assistance would stop this month, can now breathe a little easier," Sablan said. "Teachers and staff, who knew PSS was running out of money to pay them and keep our schools operating, can now breathe easy.

"Taxpayers will get a second impact payment, which means $2,400 for a family of four. Businesses and non-profits that have seen their revenues collapse will get a second opportunity for a forgivable Paycheck Protection Program loan. And Congress has doubled down on healthcare funding to help with testing, tracing, and the vaccine roll-out."

### $14M in Marianas food aid, $90M Community Disaster funds allowed

"As always, my primary goal in negotiations was to make sure the people of the Marianas were included in these national policies, just like Americans everywhere," Sablan said. "But the appropriations and COVID relief bill also have very specific provisions that I worked to add for the Marianas.

"Gov. [Ralph DLG] Torres asked for $11,527,811 in additional food stamp funding in August. I got him $14,000,000 in the relief bill," Sablan said, "more than he asked for, and enough to allow the governor to reinstate everyone who lost food stamps in October or had their benefits cut, which I hope he will restore immediately."

Sablan was also able to include an amendment to FEMA's Community Disaster Loan program, which Torres wanted. The loans are generally only for municipalities, not state-level governments like the Commonwealth. The amendment Sablan included makes the Commonwealth eligible. In addition, Sablan lifted the cap of $5 million that normally applies and allowed FEMA to base funding on the tax loss and unbudgeted expenses related to a disaster. The Commonwealth expects the Community Disaster Loan from Super Typhoon Yutu to be in excess of $90 million. And the loan will be forgivable.

"One of the biggest roadblocks to COVID relief was that Republicans in the Senate are opposed to giving any relief to state and territorial governments," Sablan said. "As a result, there is no direct aid to governments in the bill passed today. However, by including the CDL language we will be able to get the Commonwealth what other states and territories did not get: a significant amount of operating capital to provide public services."

### Unemployment extended; CWs qualify

People who lost their jobs because of the pandemic also get relief. Sablan included the Marianas in the unemployment benefits in the CARES Act last March, even though the Commonwealth has never provided unemployment insurance for workers. A special Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation program ran from March to July with a $600 weekly payment. And a Pandemic Unemployment Assistance base payment of up to $345 weekly began with the CARES Act and is set to run out this month.

With passage of the new COVID relief package FPUC will restart with $300 weekly through March 14; and PUA will continue through April 5.

"We also spelled out very specifically that CW workers, who get laid off because of coronavirus, are eligible for PUA and FPUC," Sablan said. "This is what Congress intended in the CARES Act, but the Department of Labor blocked it. Now, CW workers will be eligible for PUA and FPUC.

Through Dec. 12, unemployed workers in the Marianas have received over $172 million in PUA and FPUC. While it is not known exactly how many CW workers will qualify, Sablan's language making them eligible is expected to pump tens of millions of additional spending into the Marianas economy, helping local businesses and adding to Commonwealth government revenues.

The relief act also provides over $284 billion for first and second forgivable Paycheck Protection Program loans, so businesses and nonprofits can keep employees working. $20 billion is included for new Economic Injury Disaster Loan grants for businesses in low-income communities, $3.5 billion for continued SBA debt relief payments, and $2 billion for enhancements to SBA lending. The legislation also dedicates $15 billion to help for live venues, independent movie theaters, and cultural institutions.

### Education funding will keep schools running, teachers and staff paid

The COVID relief also provides significant new funding for education in the Marianas. According to Public School System officials, kindergarten through high school will receive $68.7 million. Their estimate is based on a set-aside for the Marianas, American Samoa, Guam, and the U.S. Virgin Islands' K-12 schools of $404 million. The funds are expected to be allocated based on the number of children in each area from families with incomes below the federal poverty line.

This is the second time this year that Sablan has made sure PSS teachers, support staff, and school administrators would be paid with federal money, when the Commonwealth government could not provide sufficient budgeted funds. Congress also expects the money to support ventilation system repair and replacement to prevent virus transmission and allow for classrooms to reopen.

**A longer version of this story is available at www. saipantribune.com**

# Torres says CNMI fight vs. COVID-19 now on last lap

Gov. Ralph DLG Torres said Friday that with the vaccine against COVID-19 now available, the CNMI's fight against the pandemic is now on its last lap.

Speaking at a radio news briefing, Torres said the CNMI has been through this COVID-19 for the last 10 months and all work together as a community.

"We should continue to work on the remaining days and months until we all get this COVID vaccine into our community," he said.

Torres encouraged everyone to take the vaccine and asked those that are anxiously waiting to make sure they register in.

The governor got vaccinated Saturday.

Torres said there are some guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention that the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force is following through.

He said first and foremost will be the nurses, doctors, and the first responders.

"But overall, we encourage all of our community to take advantage of this vaccine," he said.

Torres said he is aware that there are a lot of questions out there, but they have a call center as part of their educational outreach/campaign program.

The governor said he is personally thanking everyone in the community and to the departments/agencies, and business partners for "making the system works."

The first batch of the Pfizer/BioNTech COVID-19 vaccines arrived on Saipan last Thursday. The vaccine shots will be free. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

## Tinian municipality still on CARES Act

**By JUSTINE NAUTA**
justine_nauta@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

**TINIAN**—The Municipality of Tinian is set to slowly go back to paying their government employees from government funds, as their Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act comes to an end this month.

According to Allen Perez, Tinian Mayor's Office chief of staff, the island was allotted $500,000 for only personnel and operations. To date, they have a balance of approximately $150,000 that they will be sure to use up by the end of the month.

In an interview, Tinian and Aguiguan Mayor Edwin P. Aldan said that while the municipality will slowly move back to government funds, there will be some employees who will be furloughed.

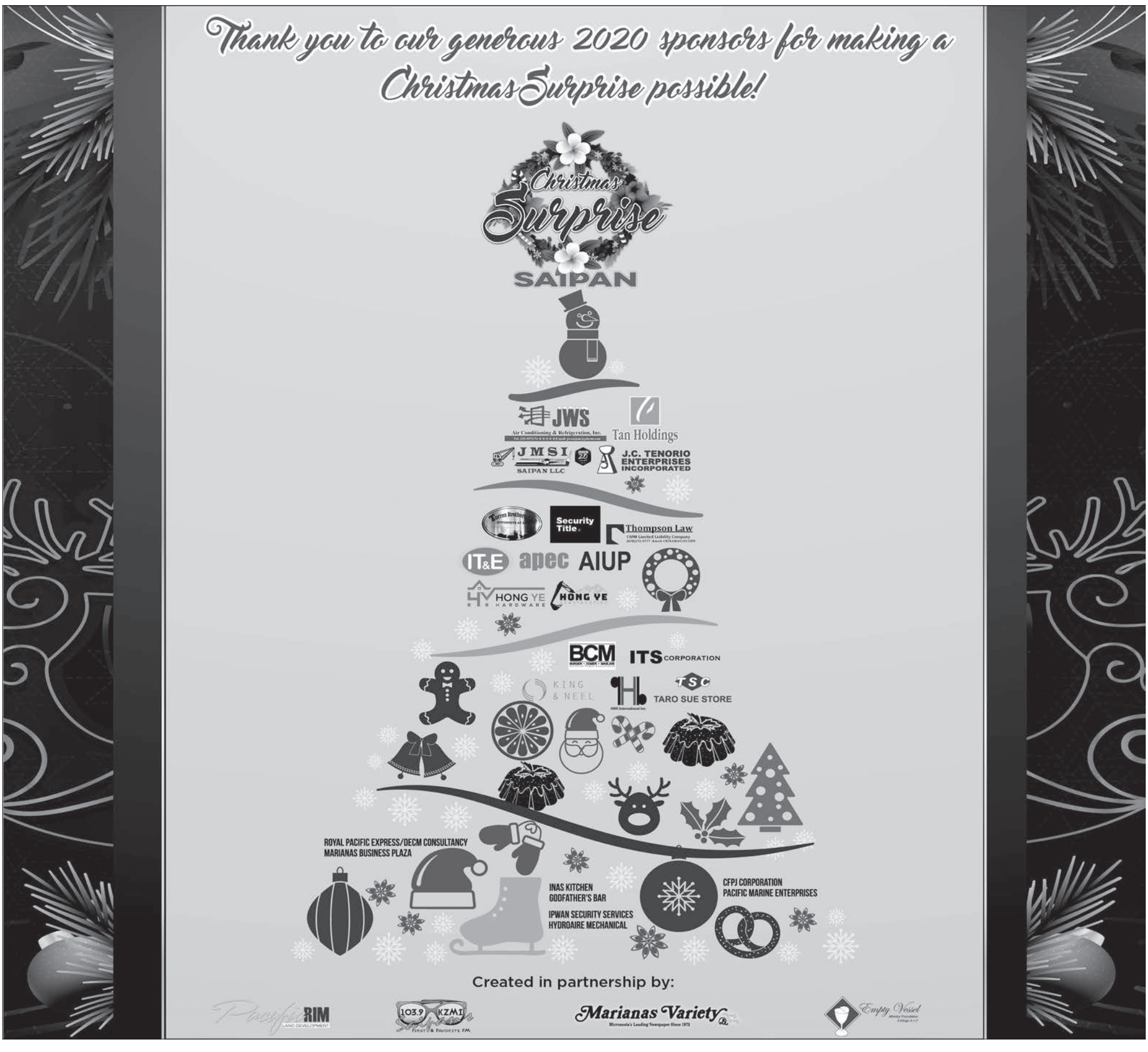
"We're slowly moving back these government employees back to government funding status. There are some employees that unfortunately, will not be coming back, [but] we're hoping that the economy comes back," said Aldan, adding that he's hopeful that the economy will rebound so people will have secure jobs again.

Aldan also stated that while Saipan has hotels, stores, local businesses, restaurants, etc. that are open and providing employment, Tinian is a smaller community where the jobs are sparse and little to no job opportunities at the moment. Additionally, the biggest employer for Tinian's community is the government.

By next year, Tinian will be seeing more job opportunities as they are looking forward to upcoming projects from the Federal Emergency Management Administration, the Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery Program, other military projects, etc.

Aldan stated that it's time that they give back to their people with the opportunity to be trained as a skilled worker. "That's what we're missing, [what] we're lacking on our own island, and so we need to start training people in certain particular skills so that they can go out [to find] jobs and find whatever is necessary for them to provide for their family," said Aldan.

Based on Census 2010, Tinian's population was 2,800 people, but before that Tinian's population was approximately 4,000 people.



## Commonwealth Utilities Corporation
### Office of the Executive Director

# REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
# CUC-RFP-21-009

### Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) for Power Plant No.1, Lower Base, Saipan

The Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC), is soliciting competitive sealed proposals from qualified and experienced entities for a turn-key design and implementation of two SCADA systems and two additives at Power Plant No.1, Lower Base, Saipan, the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands.

*The award of this project is under the Department of the Interior Office of Insular Affairs.*

The RFP Package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays, upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of $100.00 for one package.

**One (1) original and five (5) hard copies** of your submission must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked ***"CUC-RFP-21-009, Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) System for Power Plant No.1, Lower Base, Saipan"*** to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, no later than **January 5, 2021.** Late submissions and conditional offers will not be considered.

Discussions may be conducted with responsible offerors who submit proposals determined to be reasonably susceptible of being selected for award for the purpose of clarification and to ensure full understanding of and responsiveness to solicitation requirements. All proposers shall be accorded fair and equal treatment with respect to any opportunity to discussion. During discussions, there will be no disclosure of any information derived from proposals submitted by competing proposers.

All Proposers are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the Proposer due to lack of information or understanding of the proposal requirements in the course of Contractor's preparation of a proposal or supply under the contract. The RFP does not commit CUC to award a contract, to pay any cost incurred in the preparation of the proposal under this request, or to procure or contract for services. The Proposers are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed as per the CUC Procurement Regulations.

Questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from pre-registered prospective proposers and must be submitted in writing no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on December 22, 2020** to Manny Sablan, CUC's Purchasing Administrator via email address manny.sablan@cucgov.org with a copy to Richard Cano, CUC's Power Generation Manager via email richard.cano@cucgov.org and Christie L. Sablan, CUC's Senior Administrative Technician via email address christie.sablan@cucgov.org.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all proposals for any reason and to waive any defects in said proposal, if in its sole opinion, to do so would be in the best interest of CUC. All proposals shall become the property of CUC.

GARY P. CAMACHO
Executive Director

MANNY BOYER SABLAN
Purchasing Administrator

# 'An Evening with TTT' a success

By JUSTINE NAUTA
justine_nauta@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Tasi to Table Inc. held an event called "An Evening with TTT" to introduce its 2021 plans to its sponsors last Dec. 17 at the Aqua Resort Club in Achugao.

"The event had an impactful turnout, private businesses that support, or are thinking of supporting, the program was able to get their chance to understand what TTT does and how it is effectuating change in the youth of the CNMI through its clubs in all four public high schools," said TTT vice president Wayne Pangelinan.

Jose "Joe" C. Ayuyu, president and owner/operator of McDonald's of Guam and Saipan branch, surprised TTT with a check to show his support for the program. The amount of the check could not be disclosed, however, Pangelinan said it was a "good amount."

Ayuyu stated that he was impressed and confident in the program, which is why he decided that the youth program is on their list of support from the company.

Next on TTT's list for 2021 is the development of the family-oriented fishing activity. Their upcoming shoreline casting tournament in collaboration and full sponsorship from Fishing Tackle & Sporting Goods owners Pierre and Cathy Lam.

"It's important for the kids to learn about fishing because of our environment, our natural resources here, we're rich in that. We believe in education, we believe in the mission for TTT. They have displayed so much hard work, and we are here to give that lift to them. It benefits everybody," said Cathy Lam. Lam added that the dedication and hard work is why her and her husband fully supports the program.

TTT has secured support from Micronesia Islands Nature Alliance, the Department of Public Safety's Boating Safety, and the Bureau of Environmental and Coastal Quality water quality division. Another collaboration is with PSS mental health, Garrett Lee Smith Youth Suicide Prevention Program under the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp., and many more.

TTT's major goal is to be one of the 30 recipients of the Saltonstall-Kennedy grant. The grant funds projects that address the needs of fishing communities, optimize economic benefits by building and maintaining sustainable fisheries, and increase other opportunities to keep working waterfronts viable. Successful applicants will be announced in May 2021.

TTT is an eight-month long program that kicked off last October 2020 with 50 students, 40 new students, and 10 returning students. Last year, the club only had 28 students, but this year the club now has 50 students.

Pangelinan stated that they intend to branch out to Tinian and Rota by next year in February or March, but that depends on the support from the Department of Lands & Natural Resources.

Due to TTT fully funding their program, they are calling for everyone's assistance in supporting the program because they are not a two or three-week program, but an eight-month long program that provides learning opportunities on methods of fishing, environment protection, and preservation, as well as the mental state of all the participants in both the classroom and hands-on experience.

## Commonwealth Utilities Corporation
### Office of the Executive Director

# INVITATION FOR BIDS
# CUC-IFB-20-007

### FINA SISU WATERLINE REPLACEMENT (W16-051)

The Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed bids from qualified firms for the Construction of Fina Sisu Waterline Replacement in Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. The project consists, in general installation of a new main waterline and lateral service line; connection to the existing waterline; relocation of water meters from private property to right-of-way, installation of gate valve assembly, flush hydrants, fire hydrants, air release valves, existing laterals service tap relocation to new main waterline, restoration of existing asphalt concrete road, restoration of existing concrete slab on grade; and other related work. The work shall be done in accordance with the Project Plans and Specifications and without disruption to the daily operation of the water system.

***This project is funded by a grant from the United Sates of Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA). The award of this project is contingent upon receipt of the approval for project award from USEPA.***

CUC requires the Project to be completed in **365 calendar days** from date of award of contract.

Prospective Bidders for this IFB must pre-register with the CUC Procurement & Supply Division. The Bid Package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays, upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of $200.00 (non-refundable) for one IFB package set.

A Pre-Bid Conference followed by a Site Visit is scheduled on **December 28, 2020 at 10:00 AM (ChST)** at the CUC Main Conference Room, 3rd Floor, Room No.17, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building.

**One (1) original and Five (5) hard copies** must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked **"CUC-IFB-20-007s, Fina Sisu Water Line Replacement"**, to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on January 14, 2021**, at which time they will be publicly opened and read aloud. Late submissions and conditional bids will not be considered. Bid shall be submitted on the provided Bid Forms. Bidders are required to complete all Bid Forms. Bidders may supplement the form as appropriate. Bids will be required to be submitted under a condition of irrevocability for a period of 60 days after submission. **Late submissions and conditional bids will not be considered.**

All bidders are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the bidders due to lack of information or understanding of the bid requirements in the course of Contractor's preparation of a bid under the contract.

Bids shall be accompanied by a bid guarantee of not less than fifteen percent (15%) of the amount of the bid. The security deposit may be in cash, certified check, cashier's check, or bid bond executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety or other surety acceptable to the Attorney General.

A *Payment Bond* of one hundred (100%) percent and a *Performance Bond* of one hundred (100%) percent of the total bid price will be required upon the execution of the contract by the successful bidders. The Payment and Performance bond must be executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety or other surety acceptable to the Attorney General.

All insurers' questions, concerns and qualification shall be handled by the Department of Commerce Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC). The OIC is tasked with regulating and monitoring compliance to the CNMI's Insurance Code (Title 4, Division 7). *Bidders are required to submit a clearance from the OIC certifying their insurer of choice is in compliance with the CNMI's Insurance Code.*

Bidders are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed pursuant to the CUC Procurement Regulations.

This Invitation for Bids does not commit CUC to the award of a contract or contracts, nor to pay any cost incurred in the preparation and submission of bids in anticipation of a contract. Bidders are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the bidders due to lack of information or understanding of the bid requirements in the course of Contractor's preparation of a bid under the contract.

All questions or request for clarification regarding this project must be submitted in writing no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on January 4, 2021** to Mr. Manny B. Sablan, CUC Purchasing Administrator, via email manny.sablan@cucgov.org with a copy to Mr. Dennis Formalejo, CUC Water/Wastewater Engineer via email dennis.formalejo@cucgov.org and Ms. Chrisite L. Sablan, CUC's Senior Administrative Technician via email christie.sablan@cucgov.org .

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all bids and waive any non-material imperfection in the bid proposal in the best interest of the government. All bids shall become the property of CUC.

GARY P. CAMACHO
Executive Director

MANNY B. SABLAN
Purchasing Administrator

## Commonwealth Utilities Corporation
### Office of the Executive Director

# REQUEST FOR A&E SERVICES
# CUC-RAES-21-012

### Engineering Consulting Services for CUC's Integrated Solar Photovoltaic Energy and Battery Storage Systems

The Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed RAES Proposals from qualified firms for engineering consultant services for CUC's solar photovoltaic and renewable energy systems in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

*The award of this project is under the Department of the Interior Office of Insular Affairs.*

The RAES package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of $100.00 for one RAES package set.

**One (1) original and five (5) hard copies of the AES Proposal** marked *"CUC-RAES-21-012, Engineering Consulting Services for CUC's Integrated Solar Photovoltaic Energy and Battery Storage Systems"*, to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, **no later than December 30, 2020 at 10:00 a.m. (ChST)**. Late submissions and conditional offers will not be considered.

Discussions may be conducted with responsible proposers who submit RAES Proposal determined to be reasonably susceptible of being selected for award for the purpose of clarification and to ensure full understanding of and responsiveness to solicitation requirements. All proposers shall be accorded fair and equal treatment with respect to any opportunity for discussion. During discussions, there will be no disclosure of any information derived from the RAES Proposal submitted by competing proposers.

All proposers are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the proposer due to lack of information or understanding of the RAES requirements in the course of proposer's preparation of the RAES under the contract. The RAES does not commit CUC to award a contract, to pay any cost incurred in the preparation of the RAES under this request, or to procure or contract for services. Proposers are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This RAES and the ensuing contract shall be executed as per the CUC Procurement Regulations.

Questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from pre-registered prospective proposers and must be submitted in writing no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on December 15, 2020** to Manny B. Sablan, CUC Purchasing Administrator, via email address manny.sablan@cucgov.org with a copy to Anne Crockett, CUC Senior Electrical Engineer via email address anne.crocket@cucgov.org and Christie L. Sablan, Administrative Technician Senior, via email christie.sablan@cucgov.org.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all RAES Proposals for any reason and to waive any defects in said RAES, if in its sole opinion, to do so would be in the best interest of CUC. All RAES Proposals shall become the property of CUC.

GARY P. CAMACHO
Executive Director

MANNY BOYER SABLAN
Purchasing Administrator

# Select Pacific artists featured in virtual exhibition by UOG

The Isla Center for the Arts at the University of Guam announces the opening of its "Creative Hands: Selected Works by Pacific Artists" art exhibition in a virtual format. The exhibition is the 15th in a biennial series of juried exhibits at Isla Center for the Arts.

"The pandemic has pushed us to explore new platforms, and I am pleased that we are able to continue this series online," said Velma Yamashita, exhibit coordinator and director of the center.

Selecting the theme and works to be featured was juror Jill Deupi, director and chief curator at the Lowe Art Museum at the University of Miami. She holds a bachelor's in political science and French literature from Mount Holyoke College (Mass.), a master's in art history from Birkbeck College/University of London, a juris doctorate from American University (D.C.), a doctorate in art history from the University of Virginia, and a certificate in arts administration from New York University.

"Serving as a juror is a tremendous responsibility, but it is an even greater privilege and pleasure," she said.

PHOTOS BY UOG

"Langasat," an acrylic painting on canvas by Dawn Lees Reyes.

"Family Sunset," a collage by Constance Sartor.

Among 205 submissions, Deupi selected 96 works by 26 artists.

"What I saw confirmed my belief in the power of art," Deupi said. "The works I reviewed also introduced me to Guam, the beautiful muse of so many participating artists."

The selected works feature a variety of media, including prints, photography, collage, acrylic, watercolor and oil paintings, batik on silk, copper sculptures, wood carvings, and mixed media compositions.

She named two pieces "Best-in-Show":

■ "Alternate Universe-Guam Textures Series" by Dawn Lees Reyes

■ "Portrait of a Lady" by John Dierking

■ Additionally, seven works received honorable mentions:

■ "Patchwork Rooster" by Elisa Dizon

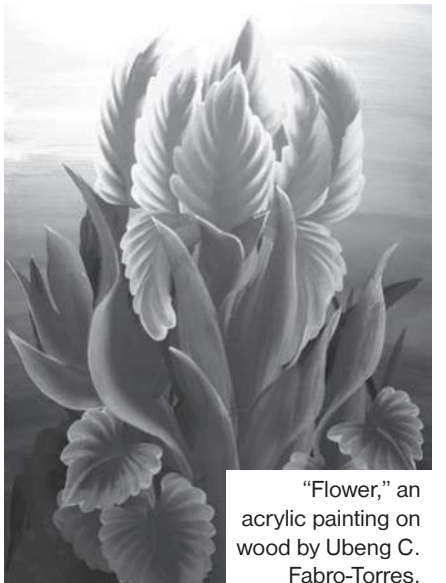
■ "Fisherman" and "Two Girls" by Don Seery

■ "Langasat" and "Les Danseuses Pago" of the Guam Textures Series by Dawn Lees Reyes

■ "Eric" by John Dierking

■ "Afrique" by Richard Olmo

The online exhibition will be accessible until Feb. 26 at https://url.uog.edu/creative-hands. ***(AP)***



"Flower," an acrylic painting on wood by Ubeng C. Fabro-Torres.

"March to Manenggon," batik on silk by Judy Flores.

# PTAC free live webinars this month

The Guam Procurement Technical Assistance Center (PTAC) is offering free live webinars for December 2020.

Webinars run from 10am to 11:30am and will be conducted via Zoom. Links to the live webinar and the webinar evaluation will be emailed to all registered attendees 15 minutes before the start of the webinar.

■ 12/23/20 – Service Contract Act – The Service Contract Act (SCA) requires contractors and subcontractors performing services on prime contracts in excess of $2,500 to pay service employees prevailing wages. We will discuss the details of the SCA and how contractors can stay in compliance.

■ 12/30/20 – Buy American Act – The Buy American Act can be frustrating for government contractors. The Guam PTAC will discuss the BAA and offer some guidance on how to stay in compliance.

Please register on our website, http://guamptac.com/news-and-events.php. ***(PR)***


Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION
P.O. BOX 500514, Saipan, MP 96950-0514
Email: nmhc@nmhc.gov.mp
Website: http://www.nmhcgov.net

**AMENDMENT NO. 1**
**Notice of Re-opening of the Distribution of Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG)-COVID Program Pre-Applications**

The Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC) wishes to announce the re-opening of the distribution of pre-applications of the ESG-COVID program made possible through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act. As stated on the Office of the Governor's Press Release, dated July 19, 2020, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has awarded the CNMI a total allocation of $1,090,630 in ESG-COVID funds to provide financial assistance for CNMI households, specifically for rental assistance, rental arrears, utility allowance, and security and utility deposits. The assistance period is for a total of (12) months and will be on a first come, first serve basis. NMHC has allocated 25% of the grant for the elderly and disabled population. The purpose of the Emergency Solutions Grants (ESG)-COVID program is to assist individuals and families quickly regain stability in permanent housing after experiencing a housing crisis or homelessness, as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic.

**Eligibility Criteria**

- Must be impacted by the Coronavirus pandemic (e.g. furloughed, reduction of hours, living in substandard conditions which poses an increased risk of exposure to the disease, etc.)
- Must be a U.S. citizen or qualified alien
- Must meet the income limits (less than 50% of the area median income). See FY 2020 HUD income limits below
- Must be literally homeless or at-risk of becoming homeless and have no other housing options

**Application Steps**

- Pick up a pre-application at the NMHC Offices on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota or print an application made available on the NMHC website at www.nmhcgov.net.
  Link:https://nmhcgov.net/resources/files/2020%20ESG%20Pre-application%20V2%20updated%2006_29_20.pdf
- Once the pre-application is completed and submitted to the NMHC Offices (you may submit at the front office or in the Drop Box located in front of the building), the case workers will assess the pre-application and determine whether the applicant is eligible for the program. If the applicant is eligible, the case worker will schedule an appointment and immediately notify the applicant on the date and time of intake. If an applicant is deemed ineligible, a notification will be sent to the applicant.
- The case worker will inform the eligible applicant of the next steps once the application process has been completed.

If you have already applied for the ESG-COVID program, the NMHC case workers are currently assessing your pre-applications and you will be contacted for the next steps. On August 21, 2020, NMHC stopped taking pre-applications in order to conduct the screening of a significant number of pre-applications and also to conduct case management. ***NMHC re-reoped the pre-application process on October 28, 2020. You may pick up an HESG pre-application at the NMHC, Saipan Central Office, Rota Field Office, and Tinian Field office. The distribution of pre-applications will extend from November 30, 2020 to December 31, 2020.*** Should you have any questions or need special accommodations, please contact Zenie Mafnas, Deputy Corporate Director, Tricia Tenorio, Planner, or Sweetielyn Sokau, Planning Assistant, at the 234-6866/7689/9447.

**NMHC is an equal employment and fair housing public agency"**



GRANITE®

Granite Construction Co Guam has employment opportunites for the following trades for a project located in **Saipan CNMI**:

**Foremen (5)**
**Carpenters (15)**
**Masons (10)**
**Ironworkers (10)**
**Laborers (10)**

Project: FEMA Permanent Housing Construction, Saipan CNMI

**Only U.S Qualified Workers Will Be Considered**

Please pick up an application at
Room Number 239 at the Surfrider Hotel Resort,
Chalan Kanoa, Beach Road, Saipan.

Hours of Operation: 7:00 am to 4:00 pm
Telephone: 670-235-7873

**Deadline to apply is December 30, 2020**

Granite Construction Co Guam is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer of Minorities, Females, Protected Veterans, Individuals With Disabilities and is a Drug-Alcohol Free Work Place.

# Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER
Volume XXX, Issue No. 254

Published daily at 2/F JP Center,
Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, CNMI
Mailing Address: PMB 34, Box 10001, Saipan, MP, 96950

**Jayvee L. Vallejera** EDITOR
jayvee_vallejera@saipantribune.com

**Mark Rabago** ASSOCIATE EDITOR
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com

MEMBER

The Associated Press | Pacific Islands News Association

## EDITORIAL

# Fiscal stimulus: Please, sir, I want some more

The $900 billion fiscal stimulus approved by congressional leaders late Sunday, and now headed for speedy enactment, is, like the accompanying funding deal to avert a government shutdown, more than a little underwhelming. Not just because it's a shadow of the multi-trillion-dollar CARES Act approved last spring. Not just because both Democrats and President Donald Trump wanted to spend substantially more. Or even that Federal Reserve Chairman Jerome Powell counseled against a too-small second stimulus causing a "weak" recovery. But simply because in this almost unparalleled circumstance of a pandemic, "throwing money" at the problem is exactly the right thing to do.

It amounts to taxpayers borrowing from their future selves to keep afloat in the months ahead. Better to keep people on the job, in their homes and feeding their families in 2021 than in more dire circumstances.

And what did these weeks and months of bickering between congressional factions accomplish? Add drama to the lives of negotiators? Demonstrate the dysfunction of our legislative branch? Ratchet up anxiety and uncertainty in the lives of ordinary Americans, some of whom are quite filled to the brim with that in the middle of a COVID-19 pandemic, by the way? If this was supposed to be a Dickensian Christmas drama, it appears Ebenezer Scrooge only learned his lesson partially from the holiday spirits. No turkey for the Cratchits, but maybe a plate of reheated mac and cheese. It is a moment less reminiscent of "A Christmas Carol" and more like "Oliver Twist" — "Please, sir, I want some more." The only thing missing is the resulting swing of a ladle to the head.

Here's what all that wasted energy has wrought: $600 checks for people making up to $75,000 a year, $300 per week in added unemployment benefits through mid-March, more Paycheck Protection Program loans to small businesses (at more than one-third the cost of the package) and some direct aid for struggling transportation systems, food stamp benefits, coronavirus vaccines, testing and tracing, rental aid and a one-month extension of the federal eviction ban, education aid (including forgiving federal loans to Historically Black Colleges and Universities), a small pay boost for the military and some other small odds and ends.

Senate Republicans held the line on aid to "Democrat-run" states and cities, but not really. Many other forms of direct aid — health care and education costs, for example — will indirectly soften the blow of reduced tax collections on local government budgets.

Democrats are vowing that this isn't the last economic relief package of the pandemic and that things will be different once Joe Biden takes the oath of office, but will they? It seems like Republicans had plenty of incentive to get this done before the Georgia runoff elections. Then what? If

*See FISCAL on Next Page*

# What is a Christian? It's not Donald Trump

**By CHRISTOPHER DREISBACH**
The Baltimore Sun

*Christopher Dreisbach is director of organizational leadership at Johns Hopkins University; adjunct professor at St. Mary's Ecumenical Institute; and a priest in the Episcopal Diocese of Maryland. He does not speak for any of these organizations in this essay. Email: cd8757@comcast.net*

Whether one believes in the divinity of Jesus Christ, one should agree that the most direct descriptions of Jesus come from the Gospels. Thus, Christians and critics of Christianity alike should start with the Gospels when describing what they believe or reject about Jesus. If their position contradicts the Gospels, then they are mistaken. It follows that ascriptions or denials of Christian virtues are wrong if they contradict the Gospels' depiction of Jesus.

Consider two examples: In a July 9 interview, Anglican Bishop Julian Dobbs claimed that Donald Trump is the most Christian president in years. On Nov. 17, national news reported that Paul Ewell resigned as Dean of Virginia Wesleyan University after declaring that people who voted for Joe Biden are "ignorant, anti-American, and anti-Christian." To be fair, Ewell did not say explicitly that people who voted for Donald Trump are wise, pro-American and pro-Christian, but he implied it.

As a Christian who voted for Biden and who loves America, I take exception to Ewell's rant. As someone acquainted with Christian theology and philosophy, I take exception to Dobbs' description of Trump.

Consider some counter examples from the Gospel narrative. The big one is Jesus' claim that the basic imperatives for his followers are to love God and to love their neighbors as themselves. This formula is simplified in other New Testament passages that claim that to love one's neighbor is to have all the commandments. The word for love in the Greek New Testament is agape — an unconditional love for all people, recognizing their inherent dignity. In the teachings ascribed to Jesus, this love manifests itself in at least the following ways:

Love of enemies. This doesn't mean loving what makes someone an enemy, as one might display in championing the thoughts and behaviors of a brutal dictator, but it means seeing in the enemy a human equal in dignity to oneself. This is captured in the pan-religious and pan-cultural "Golden Rule" to do to others what you would have done to yourself. It is also expressed in the parable of the Good Samaritan.

Preferential option for the poor. While Jesus does not condemn wealth, he condemns those who put their wealth before the well-being — love of — the poor, who would benefit from sharing that wealth. To hold onto wealth or to seek to increase it, when it could otherwise help the poor, is not Christian.

Hospitality for the stranger. As an observant Jew, Jesus took to heart the Jewish Bible's calls to treat the stranger hospitably, and Jesus often demanded the same of his followers. Putting up walls to keep the stranger out or disparaging the stranger as undeserving of the benefits of one's compatriots is not Christian.

Humility. The most common targets of Jesus' ire — maybe to save them from themselves — were the self-righteous, judgmental Scribes and Pharisees. The first will be last, and the last will be first, Jesus said, reminding us that no one is more or less precious than the other.

Turning the other cheek. There is much debate about what Jesus meant here, with a common interpretation being a call to nonviolence or avoiding revenge. While it may be impossible to demand categorically of a country's leader that they refrain from violence, it is reasonable to ask them never to act vengefully. Jesus asks that of everyone.

Forgiveness. Perhaps another way of stating the foregoing is to repeat Jesus' claim that we must forgive "seventy times seven." It is difficult, if not impossible, to forgive so intently, while holding the object of that forgiveness in contempt. The former is an act of love, the latter is not.

I have on occasion imagined that if Jesus were to return to Earth and landed in the U.S., he would not head to a church — the Jesus of the Gospels is, after all, Jewish and otherwise nondenominational — but to a street corner on which stands a homeless person with a cardboard sign, asking for help. There Jesus stands with his arm around the shoulder of that person, while shouting at the passing motorists, "What the hell is wrong with you?"

When given a narrative containing a character in obvious contrast to the Gospels' Jesus, isn't it reasonable to describe this other character as anti-Christian?

# Biden was left with a mess in Iran. Can he get out of it?

**By DOYLE MCMANUS**
Los Angeles Times

*Doyle McManus is a columnist for* The Los Angeles Times. *Readers may send him email at doyle.mcmanus@latimes.com*

Joe Biden is going to have a lot of complicated issues competing for his attention when he takes office next month. Among the thorniest is Iran.

During his presidential campaign, Biden promised to revive President Barack Obama's 2015 nuclear deal with the Tehran regime. That's the one President Donald Trump denounced as toothless and abandoned in 2018.

Since then, Trump has imposed ever more punishing economic sanctions on Iran, but they haven't caused Iran to bend to his will. Instead, the Tehran regime has retaliated by breaking the nuclear limits; Iran now holds 12 times as much low-enriched uranium as the agreement would have allowed.

It seems as if Biden's path should be simple: Reverse the Trump sanctions and agree once again to the 2015 deal, which put a lid on Iran's nuclear program by limiting its ability to enrich uranium. But as a veteran U.S. diplomat reminded me last week, negotiations between the United States and Iran have never been smooth; the two countries have built up a deep store of animosity and mistrust since the Islamic Revolution of 1979.

Last week, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani said his government is willing to return to the Obama-era nuclear limits if the U.S. lifts sanctions. If the new Biden administration "returns to the situation as it was in 2017, then so will we," he said.

But that's where the rub will come. Negotiating a step-by-step agreement about which nuclear limits will be reimposed first, which sanctions will be released when, and how Iran's compliance will be verified will take some delicate diplomacy.

And Biden may have trouble building consensus for a new deal. The 2015 agreement was opposed not only by most Republicans, but by several pro-Israel Democrats, including Senate Democratic leader Charles E. Schumer of New York. Even Sen. Chris Coons of Delaware, a close Biden ally and advisor, has made clear he opposes lifting all of the sanctions Trump imposed, arguing that they give the United States leverage over Iran.

That's a widely held belief in Washington.

"We've built up this presumed leverage," Michael Singh of the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, a conservative critic of the pact, warned at a conference last week. "We'd be giving it away for nothing in return."

But here's why opponents of lifting nuclear sanctions are wrong.

First, for all their purported power as "leverage," Trump's sanctions haven't worked. Yes, they brought Iran's economy to its knees, but their goal was to compel Iran to change its behavior, and that didn't happen.

Second, lifting Trump's sanctions against Iran's nuclear activities won't deprive the United States of all its leverage. Trump and earlier presidents also imposed sanctions on Iran over nonnuclear issues, including its ballistic missile program, its support for terrorist groups and human rights abuses. Biden hasn't offered to relinquish those.

Third, an attempt by Biden to keep some nuclear sanctions would likely be a deal-breaker. Both leaders have offered to return to the terms they agreed to in 2015; if the United States backtracks from Biden's offer, the Iranians would likely backtrack too.

The bigger problem is that, even if the sanctions are removed, a return to the 2015 deal may be impossible.

"Perhaps the distrust between the two sides is too wide to bridge," Karim Sadjadpour of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace warned recently.

For Biden, only one thing is certain: Iran policy will require a major commitment of time and political capital during his first year in office — a time when he will need his main focus to be the COVID-19 pandemic and the U.S. economy.

Here's one suggestion for improving his chance of success with Iran: Begin by announcing that his administration will make sure Iran can buy COVID-19 vaccines on the international market without running afoul of U.S. sanctions.

The Trump administration said its sanctions did not apply to humanitarian or medical shipments — but it has also imposed cumbersome bureaucratic requirements on banks, suppliers and shipping companies requesting permits for such exports. Biden could streamline that process to demonstrate his interest in a better relationship.

The first priority, as one former U.S. diplomat told me, is to restart normal working conversations with Iran.

"The only way to get anything done is to have regular exchanges and listen to each other," said John W. Limbert, who was one of 52 American hostages seized at the U.S. Embassy in Tehran in 1979.

Biden doesn't need this kind of diplomatic tangle to complicate his first year in office. But it's a problem Trump has left him—and a test of his commitment to steer foreign policy back toward the multilateralist course Obama set.

# Picking two senators is too much. Here's how Gov. Newsom could handle the situation

**By GEORGE SKELTON**
Los Angeles Times

*Political columnist George Skelton has covered government and politics for nearly 60 years and for the* Los Angeles Times *since 1974.*

Critics pressuring U.S. Sen. Dianne Feinstein to retire so she can be replaced by someone who's younger, liberal and more combative ought to think twice.

Is it really a good idea for one man — Gov. Gavin Newsom—to handpick both senators who will represent 40 million Californians?

Don't think so.

Newsom is already going to select one senator — the replacement for Vice President-elect Kamala Harris. But two would be too much power for one politician.

Senate seats are elective offices that belong to the public, not one individual or any group — political or demographic.

It would be unprecedented for a California governor to choose both senators on his own.

"When you have two rather than one it seems a little excessive," former state Attorney General Bill Lockyer told me. Lockyer was also state treasurer and leader of the state Senate.

But the Democrat says he would expect Newsom to also name Feinstein's replacement if she did retire before her term expired at the end of 2024. The governor has that power and, like any politician, wouldn't want to give it up, Lockyer said.

There's another way a resigned senator can be replaced: The governor can call a special election. But that would take months. And Democrats will need every Senate vote they can get in the next Congress. They'd be weaker against Republicans while waiting for a special election.

Critics argue — disrespectfully — that the 87-year-old moderate Democrat has stayed too long in the Senate seat she has occupied for 28 years.

There are two main allegations. One is that her cognitive abilities have declined; she has short-term memory loss. The second is that she's a Republican pushover too eager to compromise with the enemy.

"I don't feel my cognitive abilities have diminished," she told me last week, as I wrote then. "No, not really. Do I forget something sometimes? Quite possibly."

"We do get things done and we do pass bills," she added. "You do get older, that's true. But I have been productive."

Feinstein has been productive — and still is — because, as she said: "People are willing to work with me across the aisle. … I think civility and bipartisanship mean something."

It's why Feinstein has been one of the most effective California senators in history — arguably the most effective.

"Her centrist, pragmatic, collaborative style was a bad match for the Trump era, but it better aligns with the Biden approach," says Jerry Roberts, a former San Francisco Chronicle top editor and political writer who wrote a book about Feinstein's tenure as San Francisco mayor.

"People should think about which presumed replacement would be more effective as a practical matter in delivering for California, despite her lack of red-hot rhetoric and lefty passion."

Some critics think Feinstein should step aside and make way for a Latino or Black senator to be appointed by Newsom.

"How about electing one?" Los Angeles City Councilman Gil Cedillo asked rhetorically after calling me to praise Feinstein.

"We just had an election (in 2018). There was a person of color who's a progressive on the ballot. People made a choice. She won significantly. We ought to respect elections."

Feinstein defeated challenger Kevin de Leon, a former state Senate leader and now an LA city councilman. Cedillo endorsed Feinstein, who won by 8.4 percentage points.

It's generally expected that Newsom will appoint Secretary of State Alex Padilla, 47, to fill Harris' Senate seat. He would be California's first Latino senator.

Padilla is a longtime political pal of Newsom. But importantly for California, Latinos now are the largest ethnic group in the state, representing 40% of the population.

Padilla is a former state senator and LA City Council member who got his first big political break when Feinstein hired him as a Senate staff member.

If Newsom picks Padilla, the governor also will be able to nominate his replacement as secretary of state, subject to legislative confirmation.

In addition, Newsom will select the next state attorney general to replace Xavier Becerra if he's confirmed by the U.S. Senate as President-elect Joe Biden's nominee for secretary of Health and Human Services.

So that's at least three big jobs the governor could fill. It's a lot of power for one man. He shouldn't also be filling California's other Senate seat if Feinstein decides she has had enough and retires.

To avoid her being replaced by the governor, there'd need to be a special election. But one couldn't be called unless the seat was actually vacant. And Senate Democrats would hate to leave that seat empty for months.

The solution would be for Newsom to appoint a "caretaker" who promised not to run for the job and would hold it only until voters chose a replacement at the next regular election.

The caretaker? Some retired, quality politician.

Perhaps Lockyer, 79, who's practicing law in Irvine. Or ex-state Sen. Art Torres, 74, a former state Democratic chairman who's a leader in California stem cell research. Maybe just-retired state Sen. Hannah-Beth Jackson, 70, of Santa Barbara.

Other possibilities: Leon Panetta, 82, former congressman, White House chief of staff and defense secretary; former Gov. Jerry Brown, 82; or Willie Brown, 86, former San Francisco mayor and legendary state Assembly speaker.

Feinstein told me she hasn't thought about retiring soon. But that was last week. On April 13, she will become the longest-serving senator in California history.

She'd obviously like to complete her term. But I wouldn't be surprised if she left early — if she felt it was her idea and wasn't being shoved. And she shouldn't be.

## FISCAL

*From Page 8*

Democrats take both those Senate seats in what would surely be the political upset of the year, then yes, a change of heart is possible. But aside from that, why should anyone expect Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell to lift a finger to accomplish anything other than block Democratic initiatives? Wasn't that his stated purpose when Barack Obama served as president?

Talk about your unrepentant Scrooge. Sen. McConnell's only transformation is going to be from Trump-enabler into deficit hawk once the Petulant One has left the White House. You don't have to be a famous author to see that chapter coming.

These are trying times. Many Americans will soon be celebrating the Christmas holiday and New Year's Eve after that. It's a time for good will toward all, for charity, for generosity, for inspiration, thankfulness and faith. Many of the trappings of the season are there, but families and friends won't be. Large, in-person religious services? Not so much of that either. Even greeting cards and packages might be late this year. Yet above it all, it's still appropriate to give thanks to all including our elected leaders and wish them well in the year to come. But let us also pray that McConnell and others will come to their senses and recognize that their "bipartisan breakthrough" is pretty thin gruel for a nation with 12 million unemployed, more than 317,000 COVID-19 deaths and counting, and with the knowledge that even with much-heralded vaccines, a return to normalcy is still many months away.

They may not all be miserly curmudgeons on Capitol Hill but one overdue relief measure doesn't mean they are keeping Christmas in their hearts either.

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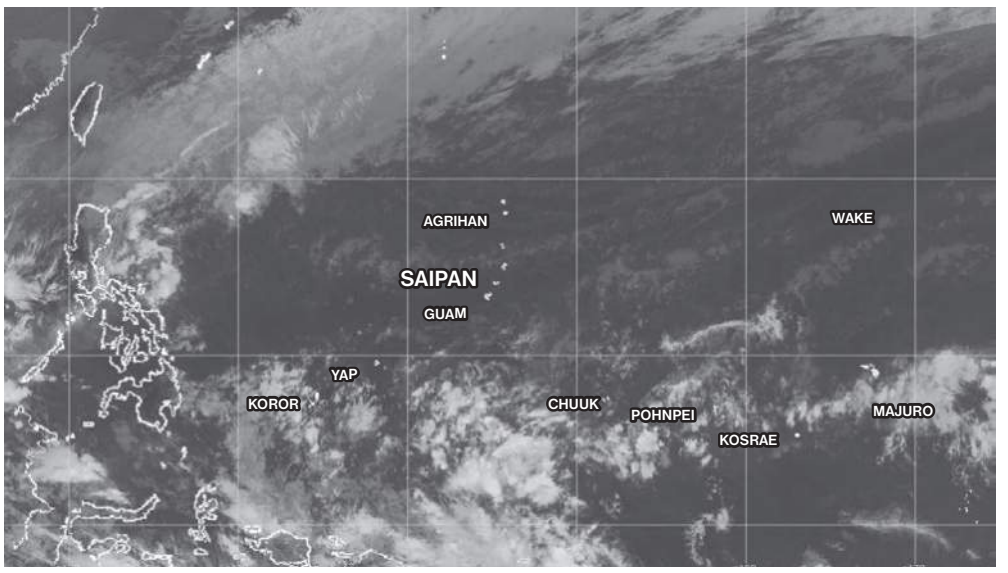
# The Weather

## 5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN

| TODAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY | SATURDAY | SUNDAY |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Breezy. Mostly cloudy. Scattered showers. East winds 20 to 25 mph. | Mostly cloudy with scattered showers. | Partly cloudy with isolated showers. | Partly cloudy with isolated showers. | Partly cloudy with isolated showers. |
| 86° 77° | 86° 77° | 86° 77° | 87° 77° | 87° 77° |

## YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE




**PICTURE TIME: 8:22 AM, TUESDAY, DECEMBER 22, 2020**

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Breezy conditions persist across the region, with wind gusts in 25 to 33 mph range common area-wide. Satellite imagery and Doppler radar show an area of isolated showers passing through most of the Marianas. wave heights are currently near 8 feet at Tanapag and 9 feet at Ritidian, where the water temperature is 83 degrees.

*Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/*

## STOP THE SPREAD

The Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. continue to encourage residents within the Marianas to practice social distancing, which means avoiding close contact with people in order to avoid catching the virus yourself and to avoid passing it on to others.

- Stay home as much as possible. Avoid unnecessary travel or public places.
- Avoid social gatherings in groups of more than 10.
- Choose drive-thru, take-out, or delivery options, or outdoor seating, if available, when dining in.
- Send only one healthy adult from the household run necessary errands, such as getting groceries or picking up medications. Leave children, elderly, and other vulnerable people at home as much as possible. When returning home from an errand, wash your hands before doing anything else.
- Older adults and people with chronic medical conditions are at higher risk of getting very sick from this illness. People at high risk should stay at home as much as possible.
- Create a household plan of action, https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/checklisthousehold-ready.html
- Ensure a 30-day supply of all medicines.

**Continue good hand hygiene**

- Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water, avoid touching your face, cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your sleeve.
- Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not readily available.

**Know the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and what to do if you become symptomatic**

- Stay home when you are sick and if you recently traveled to a place with COVID-19. Self-quarantine means:
- ❑ Choosing a room in your house that can be used to separate sick household members from others.
- ❑ Washing your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- ❑ Avoiding touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- ❑ Limiting visitors

CHCC appreciates the patience and understanding of the community at this time. To obtain general information about the CNMI COVID-19 response, contact the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force Hotline at 287-0046, 287-0489, 287-1089. These numbers are available Monday to Sunday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For medical information about COVID-19, reach out to the COVID-19 Infoline at the following numbers: 285-1672/1352. These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For mental health support and helpful tips during a crisis, call the Mental Health Support Line at 285-1856, 323-6560, 323-6561 These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30 pm. For the 24/7 Disaster Distress Helpline, call SAMSHA at 1-800-985-5990.

For more information about DIY face coverings, visit https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover.html

For more information about CHCC programs, follow CHCC on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter at @cnmichcc, check out our website at www.chcc.gov.mp or call us at (670) 234-8950.

For more information on the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force, visit www.governor.gov.mpand, follow @GovernorCNMI on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

This health advisory may be found online at http://www.chcc.gov.mp/pressrelease.html and at www.governor.gov.mp/covid-19.

**Rumor control**

During crises like this, oftentimes the spread of misinformation is just as dangerous as the virus itself. The CNMI is reminded to only share official and verified notices, press releases, and advisories from the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and CHCC.

*Source: Office of the Governor*

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**SUBSCRIPTION** Published Monday to Friday, *Saipan Tribune* offers door-to-door on-island delivery at an annual rate of $180. For additional subscription information, call (670) 235-8747 or 235-2769, or fax 235-3740.

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| MICRONESIA | ▲ ▼ °F | |
|---|---|---|
| Guam and Rota | Thunderstorms | 86° / 79° |
| Palau | Thunderstorms | 84° / 77° |
| Yap | Thunderstorms | 86° / 79° |
| Chuuk | Thunderstorms | 85° / 80° |
| Pohnpei | Thunderstorms | 86° / 79° |
| Kosrae | Thunderstorms | 86° / 79° |
| Majuro | Partly Cloudy | 85° / 81° |

| DAY | SUNRISE | SUNSET |
|---|---|---|
| Today | 6:39 AM | 5:52 PM |
| Thursday | 6:39 AM | 5:53 PM |
| Friday | 6:40 AM | 5:54 PM |
| Saturday | 6:40 AM | 5:54 PM |
| Sunday | 6:41 AM | 5:55 PM |

| DAY | MOONRISE | MOONSET | MOONRISE |
|---|---|---|---|
| Today | - | 12:46 AM | 1:07 PM |
| Thursday | - | 1:32 AM | 1:42 PM |
| Friday | - | 2:18 AM | 2:17 PM |
| Saturday | - | 3:06 AM | 2:55 PM |
| Sunday | - | 3:55 AM | 3:36 PM |

| AROUND THE GLOBE | ▲ ▼ °F |
|---|---|
| Auckland | Rain | 72° / 61° |
| Beijing | Sunny | 28° / 9° |
| Hong Kong | Mostly Cloudy | 70° / 54° |
| Honolulu | Mostly Cloudy | 82° / 70° |
| London | Cloudy | 45° / 36° |
| Los Angeles | Sunny | 65° / 44° |
| Manila | Rain | 81° / 73° |
| Melbourne | Partly Cloudy | 91° / 75° |
| Miami | Cloudy | 78° / 74° |
| New York | Partly Cloudy | 42° / 37° |
| Osaka | Mixed | 43° / 36° |
| Paris | Partly Cloudy | 41° / 28° |
| Busan | Sunny | 36° / 21° |
| Rome | Mostly Sunny | 57° / 37° |
| Salem | Rain | 62° / 60° |
| San Francisco | Sunny | 57° / 46° |
| Seoul | Sunny | 23° / 9° |
| Tokyo | Mostly Cloudy | 46° / 39° |
| Washington, DC | Partly Cloudy | 50° / 44° |

| TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY | | FEET |
|---|---|---|
| 2:05 AM | LOW TIDE | 1.03 |
| 8:07 AM | HIGH TIDE | 0.43 |
| 3:05 PM | LOW TIDE | 1.58 |
| 10:11 PM | HIGH TIDE | 0.47 |

## FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF NOVEMBER 1, 2020

### DEPARTURES

**SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| UA117 | 6:55am | 7:35am | 1, 4, 6 |

**SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| UA117/183 | 6:55am | 9:50pm | 1 via Guam |

**GUAM-MANILA (MNL)**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| UA183 | 8:00pm | 9:50pm | 1, 3, 5 |

### ARRIVALS

**GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| UA174 | 5:10am | 5:51am | 1, 4, 6 |

**MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| UA184/174 | 10:40pm | 5:51am+1 | 3, 5 via Guam |

**MANILA (MNL)-GUAM**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| UA184 | 10:40pm | 4:30am+1 | 1, 3, 5 |

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

## STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

### FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF OCTOBER 8, 2020

**SAIPAN TO ROTA**

| FLIGHT # | DEPARTURE | ARRIVAL | FREQUENCY |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1301 | 8:30AM | 9:00AM | Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri |
| 1302 | 11:00AM | 11:30AM | Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri |
| 1303 | 3:30PM | 4:00PM | Mon/Wed/Fri |

**ROTA TO SAIPAN**

| FLIGHT # | DEPARTURE | ARRIVAL | FREQUENCY |
|---|---|---|---|
| 3101 | 9:30AM | 10:00AM | Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri |
| 3102 | 12:00AM | 12:30AM | Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri |
| 3103 | 4:30PM | 5:00PM | Mon/Wed/Fri |

**ROTA TO GUAM**

| FLIGHT # | DEPARTURE | ARRIVAL | FREQUENCY |
|---|---|---|---|
| 3401 | 12:15 | 12:45 | Temporarily Unavailable |

**GUAM TO ROTA**

| FLIGHT # | DEPARTURE | ARRIVAL | FREQUENCY |
|---|---|---|---|
| 4301 | 13:00 | 13:30 | Temporarily Unavailable |

**SAIPAN TO TINIAN**

| FLIGHT # | DEPARTURE | ARRIVAL | FREQUENCY |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1201 | 7:00 | 7:15 | Temporarily Unavailable |
| 1202 | 8:00 | 8:15 | Daily |
| 1203 | 9:00 | 9:15 | Daily |
| 1204 | 10:00 | 10:15 | Temporarily Unavailable |
| 1205 | 11:00 | 11:15 | Temporarily Unavailable |
| 1206 | 12:00 | 12:15 | Temporarily Unavailable |
| 1207 | 13:00 | 13:15 | Temporarily Unavailable |
| 1208 | 14:00 | 14:15 | Temporarily Unavailable |
| 1209 | 15:00 | 15:15 | Daily |
| 1210 | 16:00 | 16:15 | Daily |
| 1211 | 17:00 | 17:15 | Temporarily Unavailable |
| 1212 | 18:00 | 18:15 | Temporarily Unavailable |

**TINIAN TO SAIPAN**

| FLIGHT # | DEPARTURE | ARRIVAL | FREQUENCY |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2101 | 7:30 | 7:45 | Temporarily Unavailable |
| 2102 | 8:30 | 8:45 | Daily |
| 2103 | 9:30 | 9:45 | Daily |
| 2104 | 10:30 | 10:45 | Temporarily Unavailable |
| 2105 | 11:30 | 11:45 | Temporarily Unavailable |
| 2106 | 12:30 | 12:45 | Temporarily Unavailable |
| 2107 | 13:30 | 13:45 | Temporarily Unavailable |
| 2108 | 14:30 | 14:45 | Temporarily Unavailable |
| 2109 | 15:30 | 15:45 | Daily |
| 2110 | 16:30 | 16:45 | Daily |
| 2111 | 17:30 | 17:45 | Temporarily Unavailable |
| 2112 | 18:30 | 18:45 | Temporarily Unavailable |

# Business

# A different kind of holiday at World Café

By BEA CABRERA
beacabrerasaipan@gmail.com
CORRESPONDENT

Celebrate Christmas and New Year at the World Café of Fiesta Resort & Spa Saipan in Garapan and feel the love, effort, and the moments made for making memories! This holiday season, World Café will create the perfect environment that will assure family and friends of a memorable time.

"We have a lot in store for the community, especially for our loyal guests. On Christmas Day, Dec. 25, World Café opens its doors for brunch from 11am to 2pm for only $30 per adult and $15 per child. Aside from the wide variety of delicious dishes, bottomless red and white wine, draft beer, and sparkling wine will be served. Complimentary pool passes will also be available for all diners. Guests will be treated with party favors to add to their Christmas celebrations," said Food & Beverage director Das Krishnan.

On New Year's Eve, the CNMI community is invited to welcome 2021 with Fiesta Resort hosting a countdown party from 10pm to 1am at the Dinner Show area for only $45 per adult and $30 per child. The celebration includes a variety of chasers and open bar entertainment by Soul Ivory Band followed by an amazing fireworks display.

The New Year's Day celebration continues on January 1, 2021, with the World Café brunch from 11am to 2pm for only $30 per adult and $15 per child. This includes bottomless red and white wine, draft beer, sparkling wine and complimentary pool pass for all diners.

Fiesta Resort welcomes holiday banquet functions like company celebrations, christenings, birthdays, and more.

Food & Beverage manager Socorro Huliganga said that each function is planned carefully to ensure strict compliance with all COVID-19 health and safety protocols. "We closed in March due to COVID-19 and opened for limited operations in June in compliance with COVID-19 regulations. We strictly enforce the COVID-19 guidelines whilst at the same time still providing that warm and welcoming Fiesta experience."

MARK RABAGO
Fiesta Resort and Spa Saipan's Food and Beverage director Das Krishnan, second from right, poses with staff of the World Café.

She added that their buffet style is no longer a self-service system. "Our staff serve food to the guests so there is limited handling of serving utensils, again, in line with COVID-19 protocols. We have received positive feedback from our guests on this "served buffet" system. We observe COVID-19 protocols in our banquet events as well."

This will be the last Christmas and New Year that will be celebrated as Fiesta Resort & Spa Saipan which is expected to rebrand as Crowne Plaza Resort in 2021.

Krishnan assured that their services already honed to world-class standards after nearly two decades of service to the CNMI community: "a lot of work will go into meeting IHG standards but we are excited and look forward to offering our guests a new level of service."

"Even though COVID-19 slowed us down this year, we were able to maintain local business. Personally, my 12 years here helped build my career and we developed a lot of clients. Our message to community is to remain safe and stay happy. Things will hopefully change after vaccination, and we at Fiesta Resort thank you for all your support," he added.

For more information and for reservations, call Fiesta Resort at (670)-234-6414.

# Shop local and help businesses this Christmas

By BEA CABRERA
beacabrerasaipan@gmail.com
CORRESPONDENT

At the company Christmas party of TanHoldings last week, president and CEO Jerry Tan encouraged all employees to spend their money responsibly to help thriving local businesses and stir the local economy. He added "But save money for yourself and for your future, do not spend it all." This advice rings true to the rest of the community—keep expenditures low but meaningful.

The pandemic makes buying local have more cause and significance. Here are some places where you can get what you and your family need for the holidays.

A Marianas Christmas is not complete without **Herman's Modern Bakery's** 2020 Christmas Specials.

■ Package 1 includes 10-15 lbs. of beef sirloin roast, 4 lbs. red rice, 16 oz. gravy, and a dozen dinner rolls for only $124.75.

■ Package 2 includes 8-11 lbs. spiral ham, 4 lbs. red rice, 16 oz. gravy, and a dozen dinner rolls for only $59.75.

■ Package 3 includes 6-8 lbs. picnic ham, 4 lbs. red rice, 16 oz. gravy, and a1 dozen dinner rolls for only $45.75

■ Package 4 includes 12-15 lbs. turkey, 2 lbs. stuffing, 4 lbs. red rice, 16 oz. gravy, and a dozen dinner rolls for only $57.75.

■ Package 5 includes 20-22 lbs. turkey, 2 lbs. stuffing, 4 lbs. red rice, 16 oz. gravy, and a dozen dinner rolls for only $29.75

They also offer 10% off on pies. Place orders at least 24 hours in advance. For more information, call (670) 234-1726.

Have a relaxing holiday at **Aqua Resort Club** and enjoy their "Holiday Staycation" packages.

Stay at their Deluxe Garden View for only $140 that includes one night stay in their De Luxe Garden View Room, and get 50% off on all beverages during stay. For only $250 enjoy a one night stay at their Oceanfront Suite, feel the breeze, enjoy the sound of waves crashing to the shore and get 50% off on all beverages during stay.

Dine & Relax package makes guests stay and eat too. For only $180, enjoy a one night stay ay Deluxe Garden View, dinner for two at restaurant of your choice—Costa's Christmas Buffet, Kevin's Seafood Night, or Sunday Brunch. For only $290, enjoy a one night stay at Ocean Front Suite, dinner for two at restaurant of your choice—Costa's Christmas Buffet, Kevin's Seafood Night or Sunday Brunch, and 50% off on all beverages during your stay.

Spending Christmas for a big family is no problem because of the Large Family Staycation Package that can accommodate up to eight guests. For only $320 stay one night in two connected Deluxe Large Garden View Rooms. The stay includes two free pizzas, 20% off all dinner set menus at Kevin's, and 50% off on all beverages during stay. All rooms in the Holiday Staycation Packages check in time start at 10am and check out time at 5pm.

For a Christmas gift idea, purchase 10 room night gift certificates (good for six months from date of purchase) and get one night free for only $1,300 (plus 15% tax) for 11 nights. For more information, call (670) 322-1234

Enjoy 10% to 15% off on infant and children toys and clothing at Lollipops located in Garapan this Christmas. They are open Monday to Saturday from 9am to 6pm and Sundays from 10am to 4pm. For more information, call (670)234-8040

**Kensington Hotel** in San Roque has a Luxury Gallery Sale every Thursday to Sunday from 10am to 5:30pm. Get your special loved ones gifts from the Luxury Gallery and enjoy up to 40% discount on various products from Mandarina Duck to luxurious brands like Gucci, Burberry, Prada, Miu Miu, Fendi, and many others. For more information, call (670) 322-3311

Finding gifts for "tween" girls ages 8 to 12 is not hard as **Girl Talk** located in Garapan comes to the rescue. From Dec. 18 to 24, enjoy 20% on all dresses and junior clothing. They are open from Monday to Saturday 11am to 8pm and Sundays from 11am to 5pm. For more information, call (670)233-8050.

Get family and friends their Shirley's fried rice fix by purchasing **Shirley's Coffee Shop** gift certificates available in $10, $20, and $25. For more information, visit their Facebook page: shirleyscoffeeshopfanpage and Instagram: shirleycoffeeshop

Your one stop shop Joeten Shopping Center Susupe "Holiday Store Hours" will be Monday to Sunday from 8am to 10pm until Dec. 31, 2020.

**McDonald's** wants you to spread the joy of giving and avail for family and friends a McDonald's Gift Card. Enjoy McDonald's sweet treats all day as they bring back their McCafe Bakery lineup that includes blueberry muffin, cinnamon roll, and apple fritters. McDonald's Chalan Pale Arnold Branch is open daily from 6am to 10pm and Garapan Express is open daily from 6am to 12 midnight.

Christmas dishes, baked good are not complete without fresh **Anchor Butter** as part of the ingredients. Available in Unsalted and salted flavors. For more information, go to their Facebook page: MBICNMI.

**World Café of Fiesta Resort & Spa** celebrates Christmas day on Dec. 25 with brunch from 11am to 2pm for only $30 for adults and $15 for children. Aside from the wide variety of dishes, there will be red and white wine, draft beer, sparkling wine, and pool pass for all diners. Guests will be treated with party favors to add to their Christmas celebrations. Countdown a party on Dec. 31 starts at 10pm and ends 1am at the dinner show area for only $30 adult and $15 child. The celebration includes chaser and standard open bar entertainment by Soul Ivory Band and amazing fireworks. The celebration continues on to brunch on New Year's Day, Jan. 1, 2021, from 11am to 2pm for only $30 adult and $15 child which includes red and white wine, draft beer, sparkling wine and pool pass for all diners.

**Kentucky Fried Chicken** has a Christmas Feast for all starting with spreading J-O-Y. Package J includes 10-piece chicken, 2 large sides, 3 Snacker sandwiches, and gravy. Package O includes 10-piece chicken, 2 large sides, 1 XXL twister wrap, and gravy. Package Y includes 10-piece chicken, 2 large sides, 1 Caesar salad, and gravy. Each package is only $28. KFC Buckets are on sale this Christmas and get any of the three for only $22—12-piece Original recipe, 12-piece Extra Crispy, and 12-piece grilled chicken. Promo is from Dec. 24 to 27 only.

Complete your furniture and appliances this Christmas from **Town House** Christmas sale. Get a place to store all your home displays as the Oceano Display cabinet is only $545, get a gas dryer for only $820, a gas electric range for only $895, and a Brighton EK Sleigh Bed with storage for only $1,599. More discounts are available—$305 off on plastic tables and chairs, 15% off on new arrivals, and 25% off on all other items. For more information, call (670) 235-6356 or visit their store on Beach Road Chalan Kanoa.

Enjoy 5% to 50% off on appliances from **Midea Electric**! Their Christmas sale includes Midea air-conditioning, AUX Brand air-conditioning, freezer, refrigerator, washer, water dispenser, LED items, Smart TV 32' to 85', faucets, hardware, rice cooker, electric fan, rechargeable speakers (with Bluetooth and lowest price id $13.99), and more. Installment is available. For more information, visit the store in Chalan Kanoa across the U.S. Post Office or call (670)234-0680, (670) 285-0680 and Fax: (670) 234-0868.

# Unique Christmas deals at PIC Saipan

By BEA CABRERA
beacabrerasaipan@gmail.com
CORRESPONDENT

Pacific Island Club Saipan in San Antonio wants families and friends to eat, sleep, swim, play, and repeat for the holidays as they offer different room packages that will surely make your stay jolly and festive. Choose from three packages that hits many staycation treats in one booking.

According to Sales and Marketing manager Katy Hung, PIC has three room packages to give guests a chance to pick the kind of vacation they want. First package is the "Merry Little Christmas" room package—this comes with one night stay at superior room and inclusive of 20% discount on food and beverage during the stay. The price for this package is $180 a night," she said.

"The 'Jingle Jingle Sing Along' room package goes for $260 and allows guests who check in on the 24th to enjoy the delicious Christmas brunch for 2 adults and 2 children on Christmas Day. For couples who want to spend the night alone without hassles, the third room package is "Christmas Mi Amor" for only $280. It includes one night stay and dinner for two on Christmas eve at ISLA Teppanyaki. All room promotions come with various benefits such as early check-in and late check-out, breakfast to go for two people, and one free bottle of wine," she added.

Hung said that they also prepared four types of Christmassy menu at famous PIC restaurants—ISLA Teppanyaki, Magellan, and Seaside Grill for food lovers to indulge in. "On Christmas Eve, you can choose between ISLA Teppanyaki course menu or Magellan Buffet. Missed for a long time by the community, ISLA Teppanyaki will open from 6pm to 9pm on Dec. 24, with an offer of premium course menu for only $75. If you are feeling the need for more varieties, the well-known Magellan Buffet will serve you on Christmas Eve from 6pm to 9pm, with a wide range of food and beverage for only $ 39."

"On Christmas Day, there are two options for guests—first is Merry Christmas Brunch at Magellan from 11am to 2pm for only $35 adults and second, enjoy a five-course menu Christmas Dinner at Seaside Grill from 6pm to 9pm for only $65 for adults and children aged 4-11 years old can enjoy 50% discount. Brunch and waterpark combination is also available on Christmas Day just add $9 for each adult.

There will be a meet-and-greet photo opportunity with Santa Claus on Christmas Eve. For reservations or inquiries, call (670) 234-7976 extention #2.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Enjoy a variety of dishes at the Magellan Room of Pacific Islands Club Saipan.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Due to popular demand, PIC's Isla Teppanyaki is back and will open on Christmas Eve for the guests' dining pleasure

## QUICK STEAM CAR WASH

# Green way of cleaning your car

By MARK RABAGO
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Do you want to help Mother Earth when cleaning your car? Then drive down to Quick Steam Car Wash in Chalan Laulau.

Owner Myung Soon Lee said there's just no other carwashes like Quick Steam Car Wash on island as it's not only environmentally friendly, but also is better in disinfecting your car.

"The difference between Quick Steam Car Wash and the other car washes is definitely our steam machine. While they mostly use soap and water for their car wash, we use our steam machine to spray steam to clean the car. The water we use for the steam is drinking water, and by not using soap, we make our procedure eco-friendly. Also, if you add the indoor steam wash option, we can remove the smell and bacteria inside," she said.

Quick Steam Car Wash wasn't immune from the ravages of COVID-19, as their operations were severely affected by the pandemic. "Because everyone's economy has been affected by the pandemic, the periods between our customers' carwashes have gotten longer, but many still visit us as they realize that hygiene is most important at times like this," said Lee.

During the first few months after the COVID-19 outbreak, Quick Steam Car Wash opened only half day. Now, they're open from 8am to 6pm

"The number of customers differ each day but more of them visit us on the weekends. Those that experienced our steam car wash at least once mostly revisit us again… We continue to provide good services and wash your cars as if they were ours."

To thank its most loyal patrons, Quick Steam Car Wash also has a rewards card. "We provide coupons for every customers which lets you get a free car wash after 10 visits. Also, there is a 'Car Detailing' option, in which we wash cars that are extremely dirty or those with too much stains. We use shampoo and steam to catch all the details in order to transform it into a new car. Engine clean is provided too as a bonus," added Lee.

Quick Steam Car Wash is also in full compliance with the guidelines set by the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force. "Only one team is allowed in our waiting room at a time, and the next customer can enter only if the previous ones have left. Wearing masks are required, and we have hand sanitizers ready for use."

Quick Steam Car Wash is along Middle Road located just past Quartermaster Road in Chalan Laulau. For more information or to schedule a carwash, call 483-5766.

MARK RABAGO
Quick Steam Car Wash is along Middle Road located just past Quartermaster Road in Chalan Laulau.

# IT&E donates $3,600 to victims of typhoons Rolly and Ulysses

IT&E Guam and CNMI raised a total of $3,600 in company and subscriber donations for the victims of Typhoons Rolly and Ulysses in the Philippines. Funds raised will support relief efforts by local organizations.

IT&E held a text-to-donate campaign for both Guam and CNMI subscribers from Nov. 18 to 26, 2020. IT&E matched subscriber donations in both regions, with $1,000 raised in Guam to support relief efforts by the Filipino Community of Guam; and $2,600 raised in the CNMI for relief efforts by the Office of the Philippine Honorary Consul to the CNMI Glicero "Eli" Arago and the United Filipino Organization in the CNMI.

"Our hearts go out to those affected by these disasters. We thank our subscribers for their donations and we're proud to partner with the Filipino Community of Guam, the Office of the Philippine honorary consul to the CNMI Glicero "Eli" Arago, and the United Filipino Organization to help victims of Typhoons Rolly and Ulysses restore their homes, community and lives," said Jim Oehlerking, CEO of IT&E.

Super Typhoon Rolly (also known as Typhoon Goni) and Typhoon Ulysses (also known as Typhoon Vamco) battered the Philippines on Oct. 31 and Nov. 11, respectively. Hundreds of thousands have been affected by the devastation. ***(PR)***

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
IT&E donated $1,000 to support the Filipino Community of Guam's relief efforts for the victims of Typhoons Rolly and Ulysses in the Philippines. A total of $3,600 was raised in company and subscriber donations in Guam and the CNMI to support relief efforts organized by groups in both regions. From left, Rubyjane Buhain-Redila, brand and PR ,anager of IT&E; and James Robinson, president of Filipino Community of Guam.

# Nation

## Biden gets COVID-19 vaccine, says 'nothing to worry about'

**NEWARK, Del.** (AP)—President-elect Joe Biden on Monday received his first dose of the coronavirus vaccine on live television as part of a growing effort to convince the American public the inoculations are safe.

The president-elect took a dose of Pfizer vaccine at a hospital not far from his Delaware home, hours after his wife, Jill Biden, did the same. The injections came the same day that a second vaccine, produced by Moderna, will start arriving in states. It joins Pfizer's in the nation's arsenal against the COVID-19 pandemic, which has now killed more than 317,000 people in the United States and upended life around the globe.

"I'm ready," said Biden, who was administered the dose at a hospital in Newark, Delaware. The president-elect rolled the left sleeve of his turtleneck all the way up to his shoulder, then declined the option to count to three before the needle was inserted into his left arm.

"You just go ahead anytime you're ready," he told the nurse practitioner who administered the shot.

Biden emphasized the safety of the vaccine, and said President Donald Trump's administration "deserves some credit" for getting the vaccine distribution process "off the ground."

"I'm doing this to demonstrate that people should be prepared when it's available to take the vaccine," he added. "There's nothing to worry about."

He noted, however, that distributing the vaccine is "going to take time," and urged Americans to take precautions during the holiday season to avoid the spread of the virus, including wearing masks.

"If you don't have to travel, don't travel," he said. "It's really important."

Biden also thanked health care workers, and offered praise and an elbow bump to Tabe Mase, the nurse practitioner who administered his first dose of the vaccine.

Vice President-elect Kamala Harris and her husband are expected to receive their first shots next week.

Other top government officials have been in the first wave of Americans to be inoculated against COVID-19 as part of the largest largest vaccination campaign in the nation's history.

Vice President Mike Pence, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., and other lawmakers were given doses Friday. They chose to publicize their injections as part of a campaign to convince Americans that the vaccines are safe and effective amid skepticism, especially among Republicans.

President Donald Trump is discussing with his doctors the timing for taking the vaccine, the White House has said. He tweeted earlier this month that he was "not scheduled" to take the vaccine but that he looked "forward to doing so at the appropriate time."

The White House has offered another reason for waiting, saying Trump was showing support for the most vulnerable to get the vaccine first.

Trump was hospitalized with COVID-19 in October and given an experimental monoclonal antibody treatment that he credited for his swift recovery. A Centers for Disease Control and Prevention advisory board has said people who received that treatment should wait at least 90 days to be vaccinated to avoid any potential interference.

AP

President-elect Joe Biden receives his first dose of the coronavirus vaccine at ChristianaCare Christiana Hospital in Newark, Del., Monday, Dec. 21, 2020, from nurse practitioner Tabe Mase.

## US deaths in 2020 top 3 million, by far most ever counted

**NEW YORK** (AP)— This is the deadliest year in U.S. history, with deaths expected to top 3 million for the first time — due mainly to the coronavirus pandemic.

Final mortality data for this year will not be available for months. But preliminary numbers suggest that the United States is on track to see more than 3.2 million deaths this year, or at least 400,000 more than in 2019.

U.S. deaths increase most years, so some annual rise in fatalities is expected. But the 2020 numbers amount to a jump of about 15%, and could go higher once all the deaths from this month are counted.

That would mark the largest single-year percentage leap since 1918, when tens of thousands of U.S. soldiers died in World War I and hundreds of thousands of Americans died in a flu pandemic. Deaths rose 46% that year, compared with 1917.

COVID-19 has killed more than 318,000 Americans and counting. Before it came along, there was reason to be hopeful about U.S. death trends.

The nation's overall mortality rate fell a bit in 2019, due to reductions in heart disease and cancer deaths. And life expectancy inched up — by several weeks — for the second straight year, according to death certificate data released Tuesday by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

But life expectancy for 2020 could end up dropping as much as three full years, said Robert Anderson of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The CDC counted 2,854,838 U.S. deaths last year, or nearly 16,000 more than 2018. That's fairly good news: Deaths usually rise by about 20,000 to 50,000 each year, mainly due to the nation's aging, and growing, population.

Indeed, the age-adjusted death rate dropped about 1% in 2019, and life expectancy rose by about six weeks to 78.8 years, the CDC reported.

"It was actually a pretty good year for mortality, as things go," said Anderson, who oversees CDC death statistics.

The U.S. coronavirus epidemic has been a big driver of deaths this year, both directly and indirectly.

The virus was first identified in China last year, and the first U.S. cases were reported this year. But it has become the third leading cause of death, behind only heart disease and cancer. For certain periods this year, COVID-19 was the No. 1 killer.

But some other types of deaths also have increased.


JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

**Job Title:** Accounting Clerk
**Hours:** Full-Time
**Company:** Yaong Corporation
**Location:** Unit 6 Rem Center, Gualo Rai, Saipan, MP 96950

**Duties and Responsibilities:**
Perform general bookkeeping duties, including checking, computation, classifying, and recording data to keep financial records. Check and verify source of documents such as invoices, purchase order and receipts. Establish and maintain chart of accounts. Maintain subsidiary accounts allocating, and posting transactions. Transfer data to general ledger. Reconcile and balance all accounts. Collate and analyze account data and generate financial reports. Comply with relevant reporting requirements. Maintain complete filing system to support financial record.

**Qualification Requirements:**
High School graduate with at least one year of relevant work experience in Accounting. Basic Accounting knowledge and skills, basic clerical skills, skill in Microsoft software to include MS Word and Excel, skill in an Accounting Software such as Quickbooks, good skills in Math and English, and skill in operating computers.

**To apply:**
Please send complete and detailed resume to: Yaong Corporation Unit 6 Rem Ctr. Cheribiyan Dr Gualo Rai, Saipan, or mail to P.O. Box 505946, Saipan, MP 96950, or by e-mail to yaong.hr2@gmail.com. Background check may be required prior to employment



DIVISION OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES
CNMI GOVERNMENT
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
**RFP NO.: RFP21-BECQ/DCRM-005**

**SUBMISSION DATE: JANUARY 19, 2021 TIME: 09:00 A.M.**

**"ACHUGAO WATERSHED SURVEILLANCE AND MONITORING, UPLAND REFORESTATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FOR THE BUREAU OF ENVIRONMENTAL AND COASTAL QUALITY, DIVISION OF COASTAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT"**

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES, LOCATED AT THE FORMER EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT OFFICE, ASCENCION DRIVE, BUILDING NO. 1301, CAPITOL HILL, SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

****FOR YOUR SAFTEY & OURS: ALL INTERESTED INDIVIDUALS ARE REQUIRED TO USE A FACE MASK & ARE REQUIRED TO REGISTER UPON ENTRY****

**ALL QUESTIONS** REGARDING THIS RFP **MUST** BE SUBMITTED VIA-EMAIL TO MR. ZACHARY WILLIAMS, VIA EMAIL TO zwilliams@dcrm.gov.mp **NO LATER THAN THE CLOSE OF BUSINESS JANUARY 05, 2021**. ALL QUESTIONS SUBMITTED AFTER THE GIVEN DEADLINE WILL NOT BE ENTERTAINED. RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS SHALL BE SHARED WITH ALL PERSPECTIVE PROPOSERS.

**THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.**

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

**/S/ ELI D. CABRERA**
**ADMINISTRATOR, BECQ**

**/S/ FRANCISCO C. AGUON**
**ACTING DIRECTOR, PS**



DIVISION OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES
CNMI GOVERNMENT
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
**ITB NO.: ITB21-DPW-024**

**SUBMISSION DATE: JANUARY 19, 2021 TIME: 10:00 A.M.**

**"PURCHASE OF FOURTEEN (14) DESKTOP COMPUTERS FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS - SAIPAN"**

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES, LOCATED AT THE FORMER EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT OFFICE, ASCENCION DRIVE, BUILDING NO. 1301, CAPITOL HILL, SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

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**/S/ JAMES A. ADA**
**SECRETARY OF DPW**

**/S/ FRANCISCO C. AGUON**
**ACTING DIRECTOR, PS**

# Asia

## S. Korea to curb social gatherings nationwide

**SEOUL, South Korea** (AP)—South Korea will prohibit private social gatherings of more than five people and shut down ski resorts and major tourist spots nationwide starting from Christmas Eve as it contends with surging coronavirus infections.

The restrictions revealed by Prime Minister Chung Sye-kyun on Tuesday widen similar plans announced by authorities in the Seoul metropolitan area to a national level and are the most serious step the government has taken so far to reinstate social distancing after months of complacency.

Chung said the measures will be in place at least until Jan. 3.

The capital area has been at the center of a viral resurgence in past weeks that has overwhelmed hospitals and increased death tolls and raised questions to how the government is handling the outbreak.

The Korea Disease Control and Prevention Agency on Tuesday reported another new 869 infections, mostly from the capital area, which brought the country's caseload to 51,460. Forty-eight COVID-19 patients have died in the past 48 hours, the deadliest two days since the emergence of the pandemic. The death toll could rise as the agency said 281 among 14,810 active patients were in serious or critical condition.

The viral resurgence has put pressure on the government to raise social distancing restrictions to maximum levels, something policymakers have resisted for weeks out of economic concerns.

AP

Medical workers wearing protective gears in the sub-zero temperatures talk at coronavirus testing site in Seoul, South Korea, Monday, Dec. 21, 2020.

Visitors will also be prohibited at nursing homes and long-term care facilities, where residents and workers will be tested every one or two weeks. Churches and other religious facilities will be shut, and restaurants will face fines if they receive large groups and must maintain social distance between people dining there.

"It will be crucial to prevent the upcoming two holiday periods from triggering a further spread of COVID-19," Chung said during a virus meeting, referring to Christmas and New Year's Day.

Around 180 skiing, sledding and skating venues around the country will be closed, which officials saw as necessary following a series of outbreaks as winter sports venues in recent weeks. National parks and coastal tourist spots, where thousands travel to every year to watch the sun rise on the new year, will close. Hotels will be banned from selling more than 50% of their rooms.

In other developments in the Asia-Pacific region:

■ The spread of the COVID-19 outbreak in Sydney's northern beach suburbs appeared to continue to slow on Tuesday, raising hopes that a lockdown will be eased by Christmas. Only eight new infections were reported in the latest 24-hour period, New South Wales state authorities said. State Premier Gladys Berejiklian said she would announce on Wednesday whether a lockdown of more than 250,000 people in the northern beaches that has been in force since Saturday would be eased.

## Pakistan warns India against 'false flag' attacks in Kashmir

**ISLAMABAD** (AP)—Pakistan's military was on high alert in Kashmir on Monday as its prime minister warned India against carrying out any "false flag" operations in the disputed region after a U.N. vehicle in the Pakistan-held part came under attack.

Pakistan blamed Friday's attack on India, implying it was aimed at embarrassing Islamabad and harming relations with the international community. India has denied the allegations. The two U.N. observers in the vehicle escaped unharmed.

"I am making absolutely clear to the (international) community that if India was to be reckless enough to conduct a false flag operation against Pakistan, it would confront a strong national Pakistani resolve & be given a befitting response at all levels of the threat. Make no mistake," Prime Minister Imran Khan tweeted Sunday.

Pakistan says the attack on the U.N. vehicle was deliberate, as such vehicles are clearly marked and "recognizable even from long distances."

Pakistan's Foreign Ministry said it had "credible information that India was planning to stage a 'false flag' attack to divert attention from its domestic difficulties, and create justification for another misadventure against Pakistan."

"If that were to happen, Pakistan will exercise its right to self-defense," it said in a letter to the U.N.

The U.N. confirmed Friday's incident and said it was being investigated.

Anurag Srivastava, a spokesman for India's External Affairs Ministry, said Pakistan's allegations were "investigated in detail and found to be factually incorrect and false." He said Indian troops were aware of the presence of U.N. observers and did not open fire.

"Instead of repeating baseless and fabricated allegations against India to cover up its own failure in ensuring the safety and security of U.N. personnel in territory under its control, Pakistan should responsibly investigate its lapses," he said in a statement.

The two nuclear-armed nations are bitter rivals which have fought three wars since gaining independence from British rule in 1947, two of them over the Himalayan region of Kashmir. The territory is split between Indian and Pakistani control, and both claim it in its entirety.

The two sides often exchange fire across the heavily-guarded Line of Control in Kashmir. Each accuses the other of routinely violating a 2003 cease-fire.

# World

### OVER NEW VIRUS STRAIN

## Britain hit with travel bans

**LONDON** (AP)—Trucks waiting to get out of Britain backed up for miles and people were left stranded at airports Monday as dozens of countries around the world slapped tough travel restrictions on the U.K. because of a new and seemingly more contagious strain of the coronavirus in England.

From Canada to India, one nation after another banned flights from Britain, while France barred the entry of trucks from Britain for 48 hours while the strain is assessed.

The precautions raised fears of food shortages in Britain if the restrictions drag on.

After a conversation with French President Emmanuel Macron, British Prime Minister Boris Johnson said he understood the reason for the new measures and expressed hope for a swift resumption in the free flow of traffic between the U.K. and France, perhaps within a few hours.

He said officials from both countries were working "to unblock the flow of trade as fast as possible." Macron said earlier that France was looking at establishing systematic testing of people for the virus on arrival.

Over the weekend, Johnson imposed strict lockdown measures in London and neighboring areas where Health Secretary Matt Hancock said the new strain is "out of control." Experts said the early evidence indicates the strain is not more lethal, and they expressed confidence that the vaccines now being rolled out would still be effective against it.

After France announced Sunday night that it was closing its borders to trucks from Britain, hundreds of vehicles, mainly operated by drivers from continental Europe, became stranded outside the English Channel port of Dover. The lines shrank over the course of the day from 500 trucks to about 175 before rising again in the evening to 945, authorities said. Vehicles are being redirected to the disused Manston Airport nearby, which is being prepared to accommodate up to 4,000 trucks.

Around 10,000 trucks pass through the port of Dover every day, accounting for about 20% of the country's trade in goods.

Meanwhile, the European Union gave the go-ahead to the coronavirus vaccine developed by Pfizer and BioNTech, setting the stage for the first COVID-19 shots across the 27-nation bloc to begin just after Christmas.

"This is a very good way to end this difficult year and to finally start turning the page on COVID-19," said European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen.

The approval came just hours after the EU's drug regulatory agency said the vaccine meets safety and quality standards. It is already being dispensed in Britain and the U.S.

The virus is blamed for 1.7 million deaths worldwide, including about 68,000 in Britain, the second-highest death toll in Europe, behind Italy's 69,000.

While the French ban does not prevent trucks from entering Britain, the move stoked worries about shortages at a time of year when the UK produces very little of its food and relies heavily on produce delivered from Europe by truck.

## Navalny releases recording of call to his alleged poisoner

**MOSCOW** (AP)—Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny on Monday released a recording of a phone call he said he made to an alleged state security operative, who revealed some details of how the politician was supposedly poisoned and media identified as a member of a team that has reportedly trailed Navalny for years.

The man in the recording indicated that he was involved in cleaning up Navalny's clothes "so that there wouldn't be any traces" after Russian President Vladimir Putin's top critic fell into a coma while on a domestic flight over Siberia. During the recorded call, the man said that if the plane hadn't made an emergency landing, "the situation would have turned out differently."

The man, who was named in a news report last week as an operative from Russia's FSB domestic security agency, pointed to Navalny's underwear as a place where the substance that poisoned the politician may have been planted.

Navalny fell sick during the Aug. 20 flight in Russia and was flown to Berlin while still in a coma for treatment two days later. Labs in Germany, France and Sweden, and tests by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, established that he was exposed to a Soviet-era Novichok nerve agent.

Russian authorities have vehemently denied any involvement in the poisoning.

Last week, the investigative group Bellingcat released a report alleging that operatives from Russia's FSB domestic security agency followed Navalny during his trips since 2017, had "specialized training in chemical weapons, chemistry and medicine," and some of them were "in the vicinity" of Navalny in the timeframe "during which he was poisoned."

The investigation, conducted by Bellingcat and Russian news outlet The Insider in cooperation with CNN and German news outlet Der Spiegel, identified the supposed FSB operatives after analyzing telephone metadata and flight information.

Navalny, who is convalescing in Germany, said the report proved beyond doubt that FSB operatives tried to kill him on Putin's orders. On Monday, he posted a video on his YouTube channel Monday titled "I called my killer. He confessed."

The video showed him speaking on the phone with one of the alleged operatives. Bellingcat and other media outlets identified the man Navalny said he spoke with as Konstantin Kudryavtsev, a trained chemical-weapons specialist. The investigation alleged that Kudryavtsev traveled to Omsk — the Siberian city where the plane carrying Navalny when he became ill made an emergency landing and where the comatose politician first was hospitalized — several days after Navalny was airlifted to Berlin.

Navalny said he phoned the alleged FSB operative hours before the Bellingcat report was released. Navalny introduced himself as an aide to Russian Security Council Secretary Nikolai Patrushev and said he urgently needed to debrief the man on what had happened in another Siberian city, Tomsk, where the politician believes he was poisoned.

# Life & Style

## From his home, Attenborough shows viewers 'A Perfect Planet'

**LONDON** (AP)—Sir David Attenborough is a globetrotter, discovering far-flung lands and exotic species for TV audiences since the 1950s. The pandemic may have kept him at home for much of 2020, but it hasn't stopped the legendary host from continuing his work to get the world to act on climate change.

Attenborough recorded one of his trademark voiceovers — warm, calm and full of contagious fascination for the natural world — for the new BBC and Discovery series "A Perfect Planet," which arrives in early January.

Staying home hasn't completely cut Attenborough, 94, off from nature.

"I've seen the world go by in the natural world in my garden with a continuity and intensity that I haven't been able to give it for, almost forever, really."

He's only left the house twice, to go to the dentist.

Recording "A Perfect Planet" required some redecorating of the dining room at Attenborough's west London home.

Comforters or duvets were hung around the walls to muffle any echo and a technical set up allowed Attenborough to view the footage, while Executive Producer Alastair Fothergill advised him, from over 100 miles away in Bristol.

The microphone cable went out the window so the sound could be recorded by a crew member in the garden.

"He's now got a caboose because the winter came, we got a hut for him. But in the summer he was sitting out in the rain and he was listening to what I was saying and recording it," Attenborough said.

This wasn't the only remote-controlled achievement on the series.

AP

This image released by Discovery shows David Attenborough who narrates a new TV show called "A Perfect Planet," which celebrates the harmony of the natural world and warns of human disruption to this delicate ecosystem.

The musical soundtrack — accompanying anything from thousands of flamingos nesting in the hostile salt lakes of Central Africa to Christmas Island's red crabs migrating from the forest to the Indian Ocean — was also recorded at a distance.

"Our amazing composer (Ilan Ishkeri) worked with an orchestra in Iceland because Iceland was not very locked down. They had very little COVID. He actually directed and conducted that orchestra from the U.K.," says Fothergill.

"It's been challenging. But I think that the final product is absolutely up to the really high standards we set ourselves."

The premise of the series is a celebration of why Earth is such the ideal environment for so many different species to live and co-exist. Shot in 31 countries, it took 4 years and six volcanic eruptions to collect up-close footage that includes river turtles laying eggs in the Amazon's sand bars, brown bears fishing for salmon in Russia and the swinging gibbons of South East Asia's tropical forests.

Different episodes look at the essential roles played by the sun, ocean, volcanoes, weather and of course, humans.

Everything Attenborough does addresses the climate crisis and what people can do, and what they should stop doing, to help save this delicate ecosystem.

Initially disappointed the United Nations Climate Change Conference was postponed until next year, the presenter and activist hopes "A Perfect Planet" will give the event a "push."

"It's very important to give people solutions. I think otherwise people stick their head in the sand. You need to tell them what they can do to help turn things around," said Fothergill, who is a long-time Attenborough collaborator.

As for how nature has been healing during the pandemic, Attenborough knows it's at a high cost: "People are dying by the thousands. Let's not minimize it.

"It should cause the rest of us, the survivors as it were, to pull ourselves together and see that we can act together," he said. "We can think of solutions, analysis, and apply them internationally."

## Fox, Newsmax shoot down their own aired claims on election

**NEW YORK** (AP)—Two election technology companies whose names have come up in President Donald Trump's false charges of widespread voter fraud in the presidential election are fighting back, prompting unusual public statements from Fox News and Newsmax.

The statements, over the weekend and on Monday, came after the companies Smartmatic and Dominion raised the prospect of legal action for reporting what they said was false information about them.

Both companies were referenced in the campaign's suggestion that vote counts in swing states were manipulated to the advantage of President-elect Joe Biden. The companies deny several statements made about them, and there is no evidence any voting system switched or deleted votes in the 2020 election.

A nearly two-minute pretaped segment was aired over the weekend on a Fox Business Network program hosted by Lou Dobbs and Fox News Channel shows with Maria Bartiromo and Jeanine Pirro.

That came days after Smartmatic sent a letter threatening legal action to Fox and two other networks popular with Trump supporters, Newsmax and One America News Network.

The two-minute Fox segments aired in the form of a question-and-answer session between an offscreen voice and Eddie Perez, a voting technology expert at the nonpartisan Open Source Election Technology Institute.

"I have not seen any evidence that Smartmatic software was used to delete, change or alter anything related to vote tabulations," Perez said.

The company says its only work that involved the 2020 U.S. election came in Los Angeles. Trump lawyer Rudolph Giuliani has falsely claimed that Smartmatic was founded in Venezuela by former dictator Hugo Chavez for the goal of fixing elections. Smartmatic was started in Florida in 2000. Its founder is Venezuelan, but the company said Chavez was never involved, and its last work in Venezuela came in 2017 when its software found the government had reported false turnout numbers.

After the segment aired Sunday on Bartiromo's show, she said, "So that is where we stand right now. We will keep investigating."

Perez also said there was no apparent business relationship between Smartmatic and Dominion; Trump's lawyers have claimed with no evidence that Dominion's vote counting system used at some locations in the U.S. elections had used Smartmatic's software.

Asked Monday about the segments, Smartmatic's lawyer, J. Erik Connolly, said the company "cannot comment on the recent broadcast by Fox News due to potential litigation."

The network did not comment beyond the on-air segments aired over the weekend.

A statement aired by Newsmax anchors on Monday, and also printed on the company website, was much broader and concerned both Smartmatic and Dominion.

In the statement, Newsmax said there were "several facts our viewers and readers should be aware," among them the lack of a business relationship between the two companies or that Dominion had any ownership relationship with George Soros, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and others.

"No evidence has been offered that Dominion or Smartmatic used software or reprogrammed software that manipulated votes in the 2020 election," Newsmax said.

Company spokesman Anthony Rizzo said Newsmax itself had never made a claim of impropriety, but that others had appeared on the network to raise questions about Smartmatic.

"As any major media outlet, we provide a forum for public concerns and discussion," he said.

## Exposure of porn addiction rocks marriage of 40 years

DEAR ABBY: A friend of mine has recently discovered that her husband of 40-plus years has been hiding a decades-long porn addiction. The discovery has caused a problem in their marriage. They have had counseling.

He says he wants to save their marriage and has vowed to give up the porn. I was told he told his wife that if she decides to divorce him, he will tell the entire family and their children that SHE was the one addicted to porn, and it is the reason he's divorcing her. My question is, what kind of person would treat his wife this way and think this is an appropriate way to save the marriage?

TWISTED IN KENTUCKY

**DEAR TWISTED: Unfortunately, the husband has a problem greater than his porn addiction. It's his lack of character and honesty. His threat is not only inappropriate, but also a valid reason to end the marriage.**

**P.S. I can't imagine why her family would buy that lie.**

**DEAR ABBY:** In 1972, when I was 12, my father died by suicide. I was told it was an accident. I was given an explanation, but the facts didn't add up. I suspected it was suicide. In 1998, my brother also died by suicide. Afterward, I asked Mom if Dad had done it, too. She denied it, but I knew better.

Around the time of my brother's death, I lost my best friend/co-worker/father figure of 17 years to suicide. His son was told his dad had had a heart attack. He is now a father in his 40s, and I think he deserves to know. Should I remain silent as I have for more than 20 years?

IN A MORAL DILEMMA

**DEAR DILEMMA: Years ago, when a family member died by suicide, it was considered shameful and kept a family secret. Because depression can run in families, these kinds of secrets can be harmful. Today we know more, and there are programs available to help families who have suffered this kind of tragic loss. The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (800-273-8255) offers support to surviving family members.**

**I do think you should talk to your friend's son. Introduce the topic by telling him what happened in your family, how much his father meant to you and your concern for him and his own family, which is why you are bringing it up now.**

**DEAR ABBY:** It's not the first time, but certainly will be the last time I'm invited to a close friend's house without my baby girl, my 12-year-old retired therapy dog, "Lady." Everyone loves Lady. So does my friend. (I even have her portrait tattooed on my leg.) Is it rude to not want to visit my friend because Lady is not welcome?

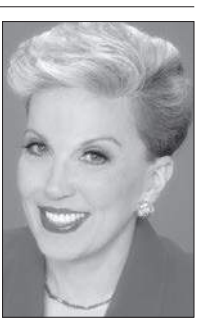
LOVES MY LADY

**DEAR LOVES: It's not rude. It is a choice. What I DO think is rude is attempting to blackmail someone into allowing a loved, but unwanted, pet into their home knowing it isn't welcome. If Lady were still a therapy dog, I might feel differently, but Lady is now retired, and her presence is no longer a medical necessity.**

*To receive a collection of Abby's most memorable – and most frequently requested – poems and essays, send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for $8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby – Keepers Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. Shipping and handling are included in the price.*

### DEAR ABBY

**By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN**
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

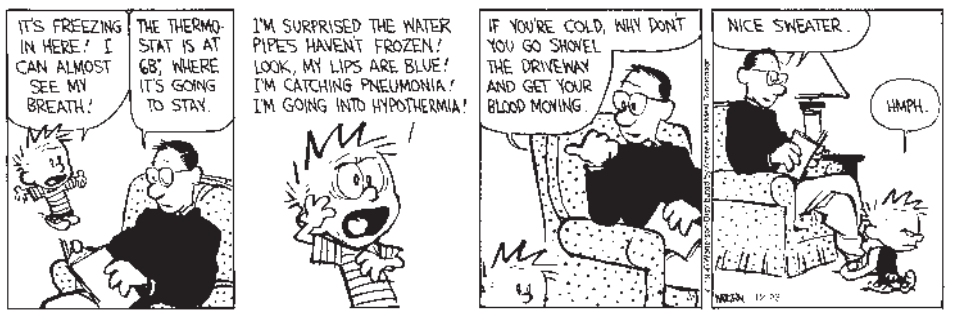


*Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.*

# Pastimes

## Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson

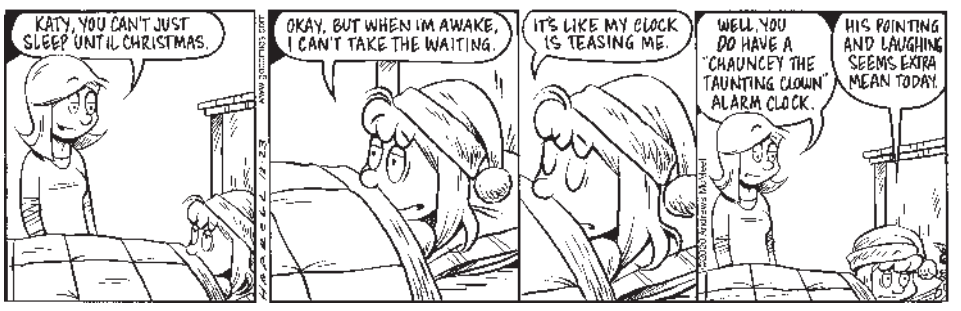

IT'S FREEZING IN HERE! I CAN ALMOST SEE MY BREATH!
THE THERMOSTAT IS AT 68°, WHERE IT'S GOING TO STAY.
I'M SURPRISED THE WATER PIPES HAVEN'T FROZEN! LOOK, MY LIPS ARE BLUE! I'M CATCHING PNEUMONIA! I'M GOING INTO HYPOTHERMIA!
IF YOU'RE COLD, WHY DON'T YOU GO SHOVEL THE DRIVEWAY AND GET YOUR BLOOD MOVING.
NICE SWEATER.
HMPH.

## Garfield®

By Jim Davis

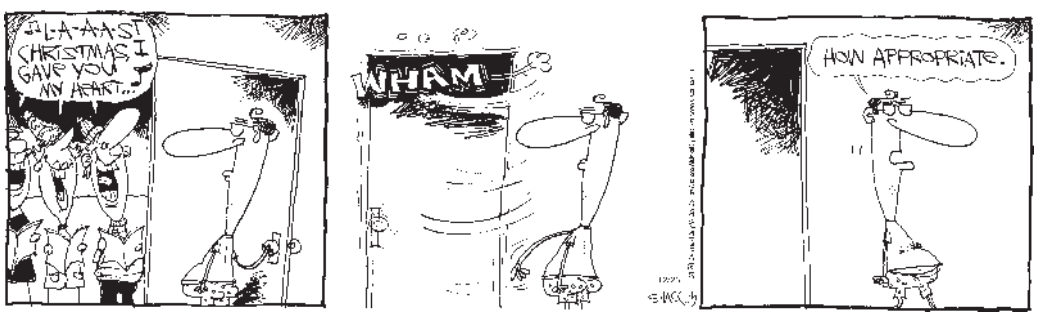
## Adam@home

By Bryan Basset


KATY, YOU CAN'T JUST SLEEP UNTIL CHRISTMAS.
OKAY, BUT WHEN I'M AWAKE, I CAN'T TAKE THE WAITING.
IT'S LIKE MY CLOCK IS TEASING ME.
WELL, YOU DO HAVE A "CHAUNCEY THE TAUNTING CLOWN" ALARM CLOCK.
HIS POINTING AND LAUGHING SEEMS EXTRA MEAN TODAY.

## The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy




## CROSSWORD

*By Eugene Sheffer*

**ACROSS**

1 Lushes
5 Grazing land
8 Trade
12 Algerian port
13 Hostel
14 Glazier's sheet
15 Nutty holiday treat
17 "— boy!"
18 "Yippee!"
19 Shopping binges
21 Sixth sense
22 Region (Abbr.)
23 Wise bird
26 Fez, e.g.
28 Israel's Meir
31 Fireplace fuel
33 Chips go-with
35 Sweater material
36 Canceled missions
38 Jungfrau, for one
40 "My word!"
41 Study all night
43 Mess up
45 Shrimp recipe
47 TV's Dr. Howser
51 Jessica of "Fantastic Four"
52 Ship's records
54 Dresden denial
55 Gypsy Rose —
56 Dance move
57 Word of warning
58 Fourth-yr. students
59 Compared to

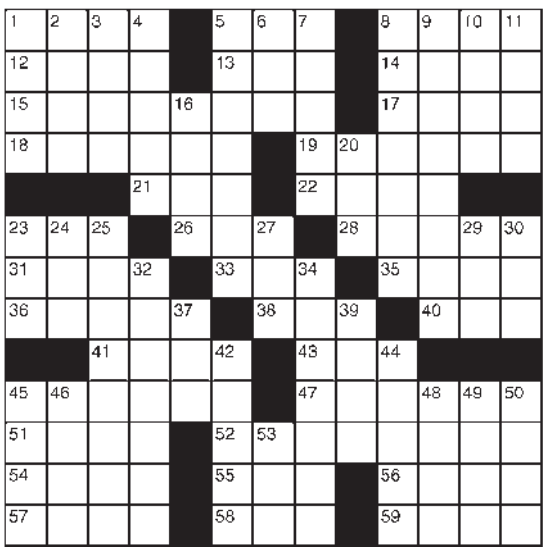
**DOWN**

1 Former frosh
2 Black-and-white cookie
3 Mexican entree
4 Entrap
5 Frog's perch
6 Rock's Brian
7 Uneasy feeling
8 Small songbird
9 Saturate
10 Initial chip
11 Stew veggies
16 Poet Ogden
20 Cribbage scorer
23 Have
24 Romance
25 Abe Lincoln's first home
27 Spanish aunt
29 Fawn's mom
30 Hearty quaff
32 Inactive, as a volcano
34 Promises
37 Potential syrup
39 "No —!" ("Sure thing!")
42 Pepper grinders
44 Perch
45 Hourglass fill
46 Nile queen, informally
48 Ancient invader of Rome
49 Furniture brand
50 "Baseball Tonight" channel
53 Not 'neath

Solution time: 23 mins.

| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| P | I | E | S | | | R | S | T | | S | A | A | B |
| A | M | M | O | | | O | U | I | | E | L | B | A |
| W | H | I | T | E | S | E | A | | A | M | E | N | |
| S | O | L | | | V | E | T | | S | _ | A | T | S |
| | | | L | E | S | | | L | I | E | | | |
| M | O | W | E | D | | | H | E | A | V | E | H | O |
| P | N | O | V | | | N | A | D | | E | D | I | E |
| C | _ | E | E | F | U | L | | | C | _ | U | E | D |
| | | | L | O | G | | | C | R | S | | | |
| M | O | O | S | E | | | A | L | E | | | N | I | B |
| E | S | P | O | | | O | F | F | W | H | I | T | E |
| O | _ | A | F | | | A | P | I | | | U | N | I | T |
| W | O | L | F | | | T | O | N | | | B | A | N | A |

Yesterday's answer 12-23



**STUMPED?** For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955!** 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

**CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY:** Noel Wells, 34; Eddie Vedder, 56; Susan Lucci, 74; Harry Shearer, 77.

**Happy Birthday:** Relax and don't overreact. Look at the consequences before leaping into something that requires thought. Put more time and effort into personal improvement, not trying to change others. Reflect, mull over your options and do the necessary preparation to indulge in something you feel compelled to do. Take your time and do things right the first time. Change begins with you. Your numbers are 5, 13, 21, 25, 33, 38, 40.

**ARIES** *(March 21-April 19):* Refuse to get involved in someone's dilemma. You have enough to do without taking on responsibilities that don't belong to you. Less talk and more action will help you reach your objective and leave time to nurture a meaningful relationship. ✪✪✪

**TAURUS** *(April 20-May 20):* Be precise, and pay close attention to detail. Don't jump into something that has too many variables that can turn negative. Leave no room for mistakes or indiscretions. Play by the rules, and walk away from those who don't. ✪✪✪

**GEMINI** *(May 21-June 20):* Be open to suggestions and willing to try something new, but don't engage in something that involves excessiveness. Someone you least expect will disappoint you. If you want something done, do it yourself. ✪✪✪✪

**CANCER** *(June 21-July 22):* Emotions will surface, and anger will set in if you aren't careful. Take a positive approach when dealing with partners, and be willing to meet people halfway if you want to resolve issues or take care of unfinished business before year's end. ✪✪✪

**LEO** *(July 23-Aug. 22):* Uncertainty regarding your reputation, position or status will leave you in a quandary over what to do next. When in doubt, sit tight and let things unfold naturally. Pay more attention to self-improvement, gathering information and romance. ✪✪✪✪✪

**VIRGO** *(Aug. 23-Sept. 22):* Take the initiative, and make things happen. It's up to you to do the groundwork. Don't take risks that lead to your or someone else's ill health. Abide by the rules, and focus on what you can do, not what you can't. ✪✪✪

**LIBRA** *(Sept. 23-Oct. 22):* Be careful what you spend your money on, and protect your possessions, passwords and documents. Look at all your alternatives, and make changes that are well-thought-out and that promise a less stressful lifestyle. Romance is in the stars. ✪✪✪

**SCORPIO** *(Oct. 23-Nov. 21):* You need to chill out, contemplate what's next and refuse to let others dictate what you can do. Use your imagination, consider what makes you happy and move forward with a plan that will lead to personal growth. ✪✪✪

**SAGITTARIUS** *(Nov. 22-Dec. 21):* Reach out, touch base with people you miss and spread a little joy to the people you love. Make plans that will give you something to look forward to when the time is right. Personal improvement and romance are favored. ✪✪✪✪

## EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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**CAPRICORN** *(Dec. 22-Jan. 19):* Keep the peace at home and when dealing with friends and relatives. It's better to observe and be objective when others decide to share opinions. Concentrate on the steps you need to take to improve your life. ✪✪

**AQUARIUS** *(Jan. 20-Feb. 18):* Keep the momentum flowing. Refuse to let outside influences slow you down or cause uncertainty. Look for opportunities; you will meet individuals who can help you bring about positive change. A physical improvement will boost your confidence. Romance is featured. ✪✪✪✪

**PISCES** *(Feb. 19-March 20):* Be a leader, not a follower. Set the standard, follow your heart and do what you do best. An offer looks promising. Don't let an emotional situation stop you from taking advantage of something that has the potential to improve your life. ✪✪✪

**Birthday Baby:** You are energetic, outgoing and persistent. You are engaging and intelligent.

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## SUDOKU

**Conceptis Sudoku** *By Dave Green*

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | 6 |
| | | | 3 | 5 | | 1 9 |
| | | 1 | | | 4 | 8 |
| | 4 | 7 | 2 | | | 8 |
| 8 | | | | 1 | | 7 |
| | 1 | 3 | 6 | | | 9 2 |
| | 3 | | 5 | | | 2 8 |
| | | 6 | | | 9 | 1 4 |
| | | | | | | 6 5 |

Difficulty Level ★★★ 12/23

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's Answer

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 8 | 3 | 1 | 5 | 6 | 4 | 9 | 2 | 7 |
| 9 | 2 | 4 | 7 | 8 | 3 | 1 | 6 | 5 |
| 5 | 7 | 6 | 1 | 9 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 8 |
| 7 | 5 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 9 | 4 | 8 | 6 |
| 6 | 1 | 3 | 8 | 4 | 7 | 2 | 5 | 9 |
| 4 | 8 | 9 | 2 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 1 | 3 |
| 3 | 4 | 7 | 6 | 2 | 5 | 8 | 9 | 1 |
| 1 | 9 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 8 | 6 | 7 | 2 |
| 2 | 6 | 8 | 9 | 7 | 1 | 5 | 3 | 4 |

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## WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

**HOW TO PLAY:** All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the WONDERWORD.

MICROFIBER CLOTH — Solution: 5 letters

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| H | S | H | S | A | W | D | E | R | E | G | N | O | L | R |
| G | Y | R | P | H | O | T | O | G | R | A | P | H | I | C |
| C | N | D | E | O | I | I | W | I | D | M | S | N | P | O |
| R | C | I | R | W | F | N | M | I | A | U | S | G | M | L |
| E | O | S | L | O | O | Y | Y | T | N | E | M | I | A | O |
| V | U | N | S | I | G | H | T | L | Y | D | R | S | D | R |
| I | N | D | T | A | A | E | S | C | H | R | O | M | E | K |
| C | T | C | I | B | R | T | N | T | O | I | L | W | C | B |
| E | E | D | U | S | T | V | E | R | S | A | T | I | L | E |
| S | R | R | A | O | E | N | S | D | E | W | U | E | N | S |
| L | S | R | E | R | I | R | R | S | Ⓚ | Q | A | G | C | T |
| C | E | E | L | B | R | A | M | M | Ⓢ | B | U | R | C | S |
| A | P | W | A | E | M | G | R | E | Ⓐ | S | E | I | M | A |
| R | I | C | O | N | J | U | G | A | Ⓣ | E | D | T | R | L |
| S | W | W | A | T | E | R | N | R | N | A | E | L | C | E |

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Absorbent, Area, Cabinet, Cars, Chrome, Clean, Color, Conjugated, Counters, Crevice, Damp, Detailing, Doors, Dust, Grease, Grimy, Grit, Hydrogen, Last, Lint, Longer, Marble, Matter, Mirrors, Number, Photographic, Quick, Rags, Require, Residue, Rinse, Screen, Scrub, Section, Shiny, Showers, Smear, Smudge, Task, Tiny, Towel, Unsightly, Versatile, Warm, Wash, Water, Window, Wipe

**Yesterday's Answer: Jennings**

Treasuries 24 through 42 can be purchased online at www.WonderWordBooks.com.

# Heat pull out of Harden trade talks

**FLORIDA**—The Miami Heat, a reported preferred destination of James Harden, has reportedly pulled out of trade talks for the former MVP.

Harden always seemed an odd cultural fit for the Heat, but the real issue was a lack of tradable draft picks, reports Brian Windhorst of ESPN.

Miami has intriguing young players Tyler Herro, Duncan Robinson and Kendrick Nunn, among others, plus some veteran players on the final years of their contracts who could have been used to facilitate the trade. However, the Rockets have also been looking for significant draft assets in Harden deals and the Heat currently can offer only their 2027 first-round pick in a trade. For those reasons, discussions never got very far on the Rockets' side, sources said.

According to the report, that leaves the Brooklyn Nets, Philadephia 76ers, and Denver Nuggets among the teams who have had trade conversations with Houston. Brooklyn and Philly are on Harden's list of preferred destinations.

According to reports, Houston wants a franchise cornerstone young player plus a boatload of draft picks back (at least three first rounders) in a trade for Harden. However, up to this point, teams have been hesitant to put that much in a deal. The Rockets tried to create an artificial deadline for a trade with the start of the season, but Houston and Harden may need to ride this out a while longer.

AP

In this Oct. 18, 2019 file photo, Houston Rockets guard James Harden (13) drives against Miami Heat defenders Bam Adebayo (13) and Justise Winslow (20) during the first quarter of an NBA preseason game in Miami.

Harden, for his part, is not discussing any of it.

During a Zoom press conference Monday, Harden shot down any attempt to bring up his trade request or his missing the start of training camp as a message to the franchise, according to the Associated Press. When Harden was asked if he feels better about the team now that he has practiced with it for more than a week his response was, "next question."

Is being in camp where he wants to be, considering he missed the start of it?

"We keep talking about what I missed," Harden said. "I think everybody, the entire league is in catch-up mode in a sense of we only had a short time for training camp, so everybody's trying to get into game shape because obviously the season just ended a few months ago."

Harden remains a Houston Rocket with the start of the NBA's regular season just two days away.

Harden reported late to camp as rumors swirled that he no longer wants to play for the Rockets and hopes to be dealt. He played in Houston's last two preseason games and talked about the season on Monday as the Rockets prepared for their Wednesday opener against the Oklahoma City Thunder.

But the Beard had nothing to say when asked if he feels better about the situation in Houston now than he did when he arrived at camp, responding with a terse, "next question."

The eight-time All-Star and 2018 MVP also seemed annoyed when asked if he is where he wants to be after missing the first week of camp.

Harden is the centerpiece of a team that added John Wall, DeMarcus Cousins and Christian Wood in the offseason. The Rockets are intent on keeping Harden as they try to contend for their first title since winning back-to-back championships in 1994-95.

While he won't talk about his future, Harden was more than happy to discuss his expectations for himself and the team on Monday.

"My expectation never changes—individually be the best basketball player in the world," he said. "As a team try to get in the top three seeds and then always give yourself a chance (in the playoffs). That's the most important."

The Rockets were the fourth seed last season. They beat Oklahoma City in the first round before being eliminated by the Lakers in the Western Conference semifinals.

## No extension deal for Lonzo, Pelicans

The New Orleans Pelicans and point guard Lonzo Ball failed to reach an agreement to extend his rookie contract.

The fourth-year point guard will become a restricted free agent next summer. Ball's agent Rich Paul said that the two sides "remain positive" they can eventually reach an agreement. The Pelicans will retain the right to match any offer Ball receives in free agency.

The Pelicans acquired Ball last offseason from the Los Angeles Lakers as part of the Anthony Davis trade. In 63 games, Ball averaged 11.8 points, seven assists and 6.1 rebounds. The shooting woes that have plagued the former No. 2 overall pick since he joined the NBA in 2017 continued in New Orleans.

Ball continues to struggle as a shooter

Ball shot 40.3 percent from the field and 56.6 percent from the free throw line during his first season with the Pelicans. He did show improvement from distance, hitting 37.5 percent of his 3-point attempts after shooting 32.9 percent from behind the arc his previous season with the Lakers.

The Pelicans are in the midst of roster rebuild around young stars Zion Williamson and Brandon Ingram. They traded Jrue Hoiliday in the offseason to the Milwaukee Bucks for a package including Eric Bledsoe, George Hill and three first-round draft picks. They's also entering their first season under new head coach Stan Van Gundy. ***(NBA/NBC)***

## *Silver confident NBA season can be pulled off safely*

**NEW YORK** (AP)—The NBA found a way to get through last season amid a pandemic. Adam Silver sees no reason why the same cannot ring true again this season.

Silver, the NBA's Commissioner, said Monday—one day before the new season begins—that he is confident the league's health and safety protocols will allow teams to get through their planned 72-game regular season slates even as the coronavirus problem rages across the country and the world. He did, however, warn that he expects the virus to create some problems along the way.

"I think we are prepared for isolated cases; in fact, based on what we've seen in the preseason, based on watching other leagues operating outside a bubble, unfortunately, it seems somewhat inevitable," Silver said. "We're prepared for all contingencies."

Games could be postponed or canceled along the way, and Silver said that if the league encounters issues that cannot be controlled by what's covered in the health and safety protocols suspending the season—just as was the case back on March 11, when the 2019-20 season was halted for 4 ½ months—will again be a possibility.

But the league, Silver vowed, will wait its turn to get players and others inside the NBA vaccinated against the coronavirus.

"In no form or way will we jump the line," Silver said.

Silver spoke on the eve of the season-opening doubleheader—Golden State visiting Brooklyn and the Los Angeles Clippers playing against the defending champion Los Angeles Lakers. He said if the league didn't believe in its plans, the season simply would not be starting.

"We do anticipate that there will be bumps in the road along the way," Silver said.

Teams will play 10 fewer games than the customary 82-game slate. The season is starting two months later than usual and the playoffs are set to stretch into July, all with players and coaches being tested daily and with nearly 60 players having already missed some time with their teams during training camp and the preseason because of positive COVID-19 tests.

And as was the case at Disney, social justice initiatives remain top priorities for the league, Silver said. The efforts will be different now — for example, "Black Lives Matter" is no longer painted onto game courts, a change from what was the case in the bubble. Buy the commissioner stressed that fighting racial inequality is no less important now than it was then.

"I think there's also been in a new awakening among the players in the league as to the impact they can have when they use the platforms they have to speak out on issues that are important to them," Silver said. "So, I think it's a combination of the collective action that the league will be taking together with its players and coaches, and on top of that players realizing the enormous reach they have with their voices."

Toronto guard Kyle Lowry said last week that he expects the league to continue driving conversation about the need for societal change.

"For myself, it's all about action. It's all about doing it," Lowry said. "It may not say it on the court or it may not say it on our jerseys or on the back of the jerseys, but it resonates when you're doing things in your communities, to uplift your communities and to uplift other people. So that's a big thing, is continuing, yourself, to make it matter."

The NBA currently expects only six of its 30 teams to open the season with fans in the stands, and no arena is planning to have more than 4,000 ticketholders in the seats at this point. Smaller attendance means smaller revenue, and the league missed its revenue projection by about $1.5 billion last season—largely because many games were canceled and the bubble games, including the playoffs, were played without fans in the seats.

# Bengals ride big first half to stun Steelers

**CINCINNATI** (AP) — The Pittsburgh Steelers' December swoon is looking more like a collapse.

The Steelers lost their third straight—getting thumped 27-17 by the last-place Cincinnati Bengals on Monday night—after ripping off 11 straight wins to start the season. They couldn't generate any offense early, and the opportunistic Bengals took advantage of their mistakes.

Assured of a playoff berth, the Steelers (11-3) could have wrapped up the AFC North with a win but instead turned the ball over three times and allowed Cincinnati to build a 17-0 halftime lead.

"We've got a lot of work to do," Steelers coach Mike Tomlin said. "We're not a good football team right now."

Three weeks ago, the Steelers were on track for the top overall seed in the AFC, but now they could end up a wild card. Pittsburgh has tough matchups remaining against Indianapolis (10-4) and division rival Cleveland (10-4).

Pittsburgh averaged 29.8 points during its first 10 games and Ben Roethlisberger, back from an elbow injury that cost him most of 2019, looked like an MVP candidate. But the Steelers struggled to an uninspired 19-14 win over a COVID-19-decimated Baltimore Ravens team on Dec. 2 and haven't topped 20 points in a game since.

"High frustration," said Roethlisberger, who had 19 passing yards in the first half and was picked off by Mackensie Alexander, setting up a touchdown. He finished 20 for 38 for 170 yards.

Cincinnati (3-10-1) snapped a streak of 11 straight losses to Pittsburgh in most unlikely fashion, with Ryan Finley at quarterback. The second-year player, starting in place of injured No. 1 overall draft pick Joe Burrow, completed seven passes for 89 yards, but his touchdown run early in the fourth quarter all but sealed it for the Bengals.

The injury-plagued Bengals had lost five straight, averaging 10 points per game and rarely looking competitive, since Burrow led them to a 31-20 victory over the Tennessee Titans on Nov. 1.

"We gave everybody a game ball today," said coach Zac Taylor, now 5-24-1 in his two seasons. "Everyone deserves to cherish this night. We needed a big divisional win against a team we've struggled against. It was fun to see the players celebrate and have fun."

Veteran running back Giovani Bernard, who's been starting in place of the injured Joe Mixon, had 25 carries for 83 yards as the Bengals stuck to a ground-heavy approach. He ran for a touchdown and caught a pass from Finley for another score. Both TDs came after the Bengals forced turnovers.

"Obviously it feels good to win, but it amplifies everything because of what's happened this season," Bernard said. "To be able to beat a team like that. We know they're a good team, they know they're a good team, but when you play those divisional games, the records don't matter. It's about who wants it more."

The Steelers rallied within 17-10 in the second half before Finley ran untouched around the left side for a 23-yard touchdown with 11:21 left in the game to push the lead back to 14.

Pittsburgh scored again on a plunge by Benny Snell after getting a pass-interference call in the end zone on fourth-and-4 from the Cincinnati 12.

The Steelers got the ball back with 2:17 left at their own 24 but four incomplete passes by Roethlisberger all but finished it. Austin Seibert kicked a 33-yard field goal with 12 seconds left for the final margin.

Finley was the third starting QB for the Bengals this season. Burrow suffered his season-ending knee injury on Nov. 22 and Brandon Allen started the next three games, all losses. Allen suffered a knee injury in a loss to the Dallas Cowboys on Dec. 13.

AP

Cincinnati Bengals' Darius Phillips (23) breaks up a pass intended for Pittsburgh Steelers' Diontae Johnson (18) during the first half of an NFL game, Monday, Dec. 21, 2020, in Cincinnati.

## Panthers GM fired

Marty Hurney is out again as Carolina's general manager.

The Panthers fired their GM for a second time on Monday after the team lost eight of its last nine games and failed to make the playoffs for a third straight season.

Hurney's contract was set to expire after the season.

"Marty is a little more traditional and I am probably a little more data-driven and analytical," Panthers owner David Tepper said Monday in a videoconference call. "I think meshing those two things would be good. A little bit of fresh and refresh would be good. ... Sometimes you need a change, and it's that simple."

The team will immediately begin a search for a new general manager.

The Panthers are the fifth team this season to fire their general manager, joining the Lions, Jaguars, Texans and Falcons.

Tepper said he is looking for "alignment and collaboration" between the team's next general manager and first-year head coach Matt Rhule, who signed a seven-year, $62 million contract last year to join the Panthers.

"Collaboration doesn't mean you don't have arguments about who you are picking," Tepper said. "(We want) a decision maker, somebody who is a good manager."

Tepper didn't speculate about Hurney's replacement but said in terms of a timeline "the earlier, the better"—preferably before the 2021 NFL draft in April.

Hurney's ouster led to speculation he may be headed to Washington to reunite with former Panthers coach Ron Rivera. Washington fired its general manager Bruce Allen in 2019 and Rivera was hired to run football operations. Rivera and Hurney remain close friends.

Carolina plays at Washington on Sunday, adding some intrigue to this weekend's game.

"Some of the timing in this decision was out of that respect for Marty to make sure he has the opportunity to look at other places," Tepper said. "And for the organization, if we're looking at other (candidates), people know we're looking. So it's mutually beneficial in that respect."

This had been Hurney's second stint with the Panthers. He was the general manager from 2002-12 before being fired by former owner Jerry Richardson. Richardson rehired Hurney in 2017.

The Panthers made four playoff appearances under Hurney, won two division titles and played in one NFC championship game, resulting in a trip to the Super Bowl in 2003. The Panthers made a second trip to the Super Bowl in 2015 under Dave Gettleman.

# Blue Jays battling Yanks in pursuit of LeMahieu

**NEW YORK** (AP) — The Yankees have made it clear that re-signing DJ LeMahieu is their top priority at the moment.

But with the gap between both sides continuing, LeMahieu is starting to talk to other teams. The Yankees and LeMahieu were reportedly more than $25 million apart in contract talks. According to ESPN's Jeff Passan, a team in the AL East is a big contender for LeMahieu's services.

The Toronto Blue Jays, according to Passan, are "significant players in the LeMahieu sweepstakes." Being the Yanks' "biggest threat," the Blue Jays have made it known they are aggressive this offseason to complement their solid young core.

Meanwhile, MLB executives believe that the George Springer sweepstakes are a two-team race between the Mets and Toronto Blue Jays.

The Jays have been connected to many of the big names on the market this offseason, so it should come as no surprise that they're viewed as a serious contender to land Springer.

Jays GM Ross Atkins said on Dec. 4 that the team had been in touch with the representatives for Springer on a weekly basis.

The market for the biggest free agents has moved at a glacial pace, with Springer, Trevor Bauer, and J.T. Realmuto still unsigned.

## NLCS MVP Kendrick retires

Howie Kendrick is retiring after 15 major league seasons that included earning NLCS MVP honors during the Washington Nationals' 2019 World Series run.

Kendrick announced his retirement Monday night on Instagram, saying he's "forever grateful for the many life lessons" learned over 32 years in baseball since beginning to play at age 5.

The Nationals decided in October not to pick up their side of Kendrick's $6.5 million mutual option for next season, but general manager Mike Rizzo recently said the 37-year-old utility player would be welcomed back. Rizzo called Kendrick "a guy that's dear to everyone's heart."

Kendrick pondered retirement during the season but seemed to find reason to keep playing.

"I was thinking about retiring after this year," he said, "but because of COVID, it kind of raised the question of, like, 'Man, do you want to go out like this? Do you want 2020 to be any worse?'"

Kendrick played 1,621 regular-season and 50 playoff games with the Nationals, Dodgers, Angels and Phillies since making his debut in 2006. He drove in four runs and hit .333 during the NLCS when he was named MVP.

"My beloved Washington Nationals, thank you for embracing me as one of your own," Kendrick wrote on Instagram. "I feel as though I'd been a National my whole career and the wild, humbling and crazy ride we had in 2019 truly culminated everything I'd learned in my career, and we all became world champions."

# Big 3, Tiafoe win ATP awards for 2020

**LONDON**—Novak Djokovic, Roger Federer, Rafael Nadal and Frances Tiafoe were among the winners of the ATP's top awards for 2020.

Djokovic was the year-end No. 1 for a record-equaling sixth time after winning four titles including a record eighth Australian Open.

U.S. Open champions Mate Pavic and Bruno Soares are the doubles No. 1s.

Federer, who played only six singles all year, was the singles fans' favorite for a record-extending 18th straight year, and Nadal received the Stefan Edberg Sportsmanship Award for the third year straight and fourth time overall after winning a 13th Roland Garros crown.

Andrey Rublev of Russia was the most improved in rising from No. 23 to a career-high 8 after winning five titles, more than anyone else on the tour.

From left, Novak Djokovic, Roger Federer, and Rafael Nadal were among the winners of the ATP's top awards for 2020. AP

Tiafoe was given the Arthur Ashe Humanitarian Award for his social activity. The American auctioned signed memorabilia to Athletes for COVID-19 Relief and posted a video that united the Black tennis community in the wake of George Floyd's killing.

The 17-year-old Carlos Alcaraz of Spain was the newcomer of the year after winning three Challengers.

Vasek Pospisil is the comeback player of the year after undergoing back surgery in 2019. The Canadian reached two finals and rose to No. 61 after dropping to No. 150 in 2019.

## Players quarantine confirmed

The Victorian state government has confirmed that all players at the Australian Open will be required to quarantine in Melbourne for 14 days before the delayed start of the Feb. 8-21 first Grand Slam tennis tournament of the year.

The government said that quarantine plans have been endorsed by the Chief Health Officer and that it would work with Tennis Australia to finalize a COVID-safe plan that "ensures the safety of all parties . . . rigorous infection prevention and control measures will be central to these arrangements."

Players are expected to arrive in Melbourne from mid-January, undertaking a mandatory two-week quarantine period that permits them to train for a maximum of five hours per day at Melbourne Park, site of the Australian Open.

A statement said players and their support teams will be tested prior to departing for Australia and then a minimum of five times during their quarantine period. If they test positive, they will be subject to standard quarantine arrangements until being cleared by public health officials.

The Australian Open was delayed by three weeks while plans were worked out for the quarantine arrangements.

Victoria state went through a serious second wave of COVID-19 infections in the last half of this year, resulting in more than 800 deaths after lockdowns and overnight curfews were instituted. But the state has not had any new active cases in more than six weeks.

The ATP Cup, two ATP events and two WTA tournaments will take place in Melbourne the week before the Australian Open. One WTA tournament will happen during the second week of the Australian Open, local media said.

As with other sports, tennis was disrupted this year because of the COVID-19 outbreak, including several months with no competition, the postponement of the French Open's start from May to September, and the cancellation of Wimbledon for the first time since World War II.

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50 or 100 miles for the whole month. When my wife and I joined the virtual Go the Distance Challenge in Guam last July this year, we found that the challenge was doable. It challenged us to run/walk at least 3 miles a day," he added.

Abragan said registration for the event is still open and free since runners/walkers have until Dec. 31 to log the needed miles. To sign up, check https://www.eventbrite.com/e/lits-go-the-xtra-mile-gxm-virtual-runwalk-challenge-tickets-131382834595. Participants must install the Strava app to submit their mileage to the organizers.

## MRA

*From Page 20*

Shane, who clinched first place in the Dec. 13 race at the Kan Pacific grounds, settled for the runner-up honors ahead of Angelito Hernaez, Kiku Santos, Corry Pangelinan, Patrick Togawa, Chris Alepuyo, Kier Agda, Boss Alvarez, Etay Mendoza, Henry Camacho (ATV), and Vince Torres.

In the Minis 1 and 2, M.J. Camacho returned after missing the third leg to beat five other riders. Camacho, who won the Dec. 6 Mini 1 race, defeated Ethan and Devin Yumul, BengBeng Palacios, and Nanako and Miyako Celis in the combined classes, which had riders going around the course six times.

The Peewee race also featured six laps with Jonoah Santos on a roll after downing eight other riders. Santos bagged his third straight win, as he downed Keenon Togawa, Ezekiel Camacho, Harley Susulin, Zane Fujihira, Cassidy Villagomez, Tate and Trey Manglona, and Baby Joe Santos.

Patrick Togawa (44) leads three riders during the Expert Open class race. JOSEPH CHIN

In the Mini ATV, Theresa Borja won her one-on-one race against Brookyn Susulin. It was Borja's second win in the first four legs, as she triumphed in the series opener last month. Susulin, on the other hand, ruled the third leg, while Melvin Reyes took the top podium finish in the second leg.

Meanwhile, MRA's series of races will continue this weekend with riders to compete in the fifth leg. MRA will make an official announcement later if this Sunday's event will still be held at CowTown or action will return to the Kan Pacific ground.

JOSEPH CHIN

Three young riders are in a close race during the Marianas Racing Association's event at the former CowTown Raceway.

JOSEPH CHIN

Riders in the Expert Open class navigate an obstacle along the course.

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# MRA riders return to old turf

JOSEPH CHIN
Franklin Santos is airborne after passing through an obstacle during last Sunday's Marianas Racing Association's event at the former CowTown Raceway in Marpi.

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
roselyn_monroyo@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The fourth leg of the Marianas Racing Association's series of competitive races was moved to the former CowTown Raceway with Jonoah Santos, Therese Borja, M.J. Camacho, and Cuki Alvarez prevailing in their respective classes.

The father-and-son duo of Cuki and Shane Alvarez continued their seesaw battle for the top honors in the Expert Open class with the former again denying his son back-to-back victories. Cuki, who lost to Shane in the tiebreak during the kick-off leg MRA's series of race on Nov. 29 before winning the Dec. 6 competition, got victory No. 2 when he completed first the eight-lap course last weekend.

"It was our very first race (competition) at CowTown since 2010. What an awesome day!" said Cuki after returning to his former stomping ground where the new Marianas Motocross Park will be built.

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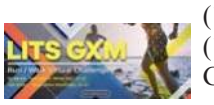
Mariana Racing Association's young riders pose for a photo.

JOSEPH CHIN

## 150 join LITS GXM Challenge

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
roselyn_monroyo@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Life in the Son Go the Xtra Mile Virtual Run/Walk Challenge has drawn 150 participants that have logged thousands of miles with still more than a week to go before the event concludes.




LITS GXM started last Dec. 1 with runners/walkers given the option to walk/run 50 or 100 miles by Dec. 31 and each week, organizers recognize the mileage leaders. Prizes will be awarded to the runners/walkers with the highest miles accumulated and top finishers (first to complete the challenge).

For the Dec. 14 to 20 cutoff, Lito Recto was ahead on the leaderboard in the men's division after recording 80.40 miles. Tania Tan led in the women's field with her 51.01 miles. Rounding out the Top 15 (combined men's and women's) were Jay-Ar Barrios (25.9 miles), Mi Takatsuji (24.29), Moji Moji (22.9), Ambet Omampo (16.1), Yulia Aleksenko (15.7), Christian Joseph Yeo (15.5), Vhoie Francia (15.5), Sharon Abragan (14.6), Jersh Angeles (14.22), Lydia Tan (14.1), Nancy Omampo (13.1), Don Aid (13.1), and Marian Guieb (12.4).

The virtual challenge is open to both on and off-island runners/walkers. The CNMI national football team training pool has 54 players entered in the event, while the 96 other participants are members of LITS and the community.

"We created an exciting challenge for Saipan and anyone around the world to start exercising while still following the guidelines of social distancing (safety measures against the COVID-19 pandemic)," LITS pastor Eric Abragan said.

"We wanted to finish 2020 well. Instead of doing a New Year's resolution to exercise in January, we decided to start in December and encourage our church folks to get active by challenging them to run/walk for

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TEDDY CORPUZ
Life in the Son pastor Eric Abragan competes in a local event in Marpi last Saturday to log miles for LITS GXM Challenge.